Rymer, T.

EDGAR,

OR THE

English Monarch;

AN

HEROICK

TRAGEDY.

By *THOMAS RYMER*
of *Grays-Inn* Esq;

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TO THE KING.

GReat Sir, whoſe Throne amidſt the Waters ſet,
O're all deſign'd by God and Nature Great,
Here, in that fam'd, long-wiſht, unheard-of Spot:
Stedfaſt on which, planting Your Royall Foot,
You turn the Other World, You give it Law,
You Arbitrate, and all its Motions awe.
This Honour was to England *early pay'd;*
And thus Your great Fore-runner, Edgar, *ſway'd.*
Yet were his Ships a weak, though Numerous, Train:
Silent they paſs'd, meer Infants of the Main.
Grown up, Yours ſpeak, in not a Mortall Strain,
Threaten, and loud above the Billows beat
Your dread Commands, which trembling Rocks repeat.
Whilſt Edgar *joyfull, from his fartheſt Skies*
Looks down, and liſtens to the God-like Voice.
When Hercules *with* Jaſon *left the Shoar,*
Pale Greece *deſpair'd to ſee her Worthies more:*
Charybdis *gap'd, and* Scylla's *Dogs did howl.*
Who this could bear, was then a daring Soul.
All Monſters ſeem'd in thoſe Heroick days.
Your Pleaſure-boat with ruder Danger plays.
If launcht in that bold Age of Poetry,
Each Ship of Yours had bin a God o'th' Sea;

Or Jove, *his Form in this Diſguiſe that ſhrowds:*
Who having left the Air, and eaſie Clouds,
Below a rougher Element controlls,
And Thunder o're more ſolid Water rouls.
This made Divining Prieſts of old preferr
The Oak, as ſacred to the Thunderer;
The Oak, of old, that in Dodona *reign'd.*
Now Oracles Your onely Forreſts ſend,
Which promiſe Seas and Empire without End.
Grafted on theſe, the faireſt Lawrells grow,
And Wreaths that beſt adorn an Engliſh *Brow.*
This Navall Power made Edgar's *chiefeſt Pride,*
(Four thouſand Sail ſpred o're the Ocean wide)
Whence Terrour on remoteſt Shoars was thrown,
When Halcyon-*days and Plenty bleſt his own.*
Thus, whilſt Your Flags, wav'd high, for Homage call,
And angry Nations let their Topſails fall;
With Peace Your larger Empire happy made,
Reſts undiſturb'd, rejoycing in the Shade.
High on His Throne, and fill'd with Royall Care,
Thus ---- You alone, great Edgar's *Perſon bear.*
Unking'd, in Love, we repreſent him here.

Adver-

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Advertiſement.

THIS I call an *Heroick Tragedy*, having in it chiefly ſought occaſions to extoll the *Engliſh* Monarchy; and having writ it in that Verſe which with *Cowley*, *Denham*, and *Waller*, I take to be moſt proper for Epic Poetry.

The Tragedy ends Proſperouſly; a ſort of Tragedy that rarely ſucceeds; man being apter to pity the Diſtreſſed, then to rejoyce with the Proſperous. Yet this ſort ſeems principally to have pleaſed *Euripides*; and is neceſſary here for the Deſign firſt above mentioned.

I doubted, indeed, whether Rhyme was proper for Tragedy. Not that I thought it unnaturall; for, queſtionleſs, 'tis more naturall to ſpeak in Rhyme, then to ſpeak *Engliſh*: this we owe to the Nurſe, the former to the Poet. Nor can that be ſaid *unnaturall*, where Nature is help'd and improv'd. But Rhyme is rather ſweet, then grave; unleſs temper'd with ſo muſt Thought, and with ſuch Pomp of words, as ſuits not with that Sorrow and Lamentation which Tragedy ordinarily requires. And therefore, of the two, Rhyme is the more proper for this ſort of Tragedy, which ends happily.

The Hiſtories examined, nothing in the Fable can ſeem Romantick or affected. But I muſt appeal from the late Epitomizers, who make *Edgar* point-blank guilty of *Ethelwold*'s Death, without any ſufficient ground from Antiquity.

Perſons.

Perſons Repreſented.

Edgar,	King of *England*.
Lewis the IV.	King of *France*, *incognito*.
Kenneth,	King of *Scotland*.
Ethelwold,	*Edgar*'s Favourite.

Editha,	Siſter to *Edgar*.
Gunilda,	Siſter to the King of *Denmark*.
Alfrid,	The Duke of *Cornwall*'s Daughter.
Ethelgede,	*Ethelwold*'s Daughter.
Dunſtan,	Arch-Biſhop of *Canterbury*.

A Secretary of State.
Embaſſadours.
Two *French* Stateſmen.
Guards,
Attendants.

The time of the Repreſentation, from Twelve at Noon to Ten at Night.

Rymer, T.

EDGAR,

A

TRAGEDY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Landſchap of a River, Trees, Palace, &c.

Editha.

Edith. PRinceſs! a Title boading miſerie;
Curſt in the Sex, more curſt in the Degree!
Our every Look makes an Affair of State,
And every Sigh provokes a grave Debate.
No popular Inſurrections with ſuch Care
Inſpected, as our riſing Paſſions are.
Love, like our breath, the Will's vain power defies;
Sooner the heart, then its emotions, dies.
Yet we Diſſembling, with a faithleſs Frown,
Meanly ſevere, our ſecret Care diſown:
Though ſtill the Darling, which our Looks deteſt,
(Onely retir'd) lies panting in our breaſt.
Unhappy Women —— equally a prey,
If ſway'd, or if our Inclinations ſway!

Either with Nature, we, down th' eaſie ſtream,
By Flow'rie banks, to ſure Deſtruction ſwim:
Or 'gainſt Wind and Tide Honour doth us draw
To barren Rocks, there on lean Hopes to gnaw.
Theſe anxious thoughts, ah! whither ſhall I trace?
I now too near the tender Secret preſs.
I love the Stranger—this too well I know,
Becauſe I Jealous of *Gunilda* grow.
But here ſhe haunts me ſtill——

SCENE II.

Enter Gunilda.

Gun. ——————However ſlow
Your tongue, howe're unwilling to reveal,
Yet ſome new Care your eyes more kindly tell.
That heart (that firm and very Rock before)
Shakes by ſome guſt from a Remoter ſhore.
Edi. From *France* you cannot apprehend the ſtorm,
There an Uſurper does the Throne deform.
From *Germany* no Emp'rour can appear,
Since *Otho* fell, my younger Siſter's ſhare;
Otho, who now of late is call'd the Great.
The others I deſcend not to repeat.
No ſuch new care did my free thoughts enflame;
Onely the laſt night's Ball diverted them.
Gun. The Stranger there——
I could with a particular eye have ſeen,
Were but his bloud as noble as his meen.
Sweetneſs did not the Majeſty betray,
Nor Majeſty his Sweetneſs fright away:
That whereſoe're he would a Heart invade,
His Looks at once ſeem by kind Nature made
Able to force, or ready to perſwade.
Together there ſuch ſtate and mildneſs met,
He ſeem'd at once agreeable and great.
Edi. How with his praiſe my Jealous heart ſhe wounds? [*Aſide.*
And now how harſh the ill-tim'd muſick ſounds?

Methinks

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Methinks I ſomething in his face did ſee, [*To* Gun.
Something that ſpeaks him of no Low degree.
Gun. He Monarch-like did in the Crowd prevail,
And on himſelf drew the Regards of all.
Another *Edgar* ſome began to cry;
Others, that he might ev'n with *Edgar* vie:
Till *Edgar*'s preſence clear'd the growing Doubt;
Whoſe beams, like a ſtrong Torrent, breaking out,
Inſtantly bore the young Uſurper down,
And in all minds confirm'd his ſhaken Throne.
But ſee he comes ———

SCENE III.

Enter Lewis.

The Ladies (ſince the Turnament was paſt)
On ſome croſs winds your late arrival caſt: [*To* Lew.
Elſe, who your ſofter Gallantries have ſeen,
Had witneſs of your Manly vertues been.
Edi. Our *Engliſh* there by rougher ſhocks maintain
That honour, they in mild encounters gain.
Lew. They ſmall ſucceſs muſt to their arms preſage,
Who 'gainſt the *Engliſh* in the Liſts engage.
And they, however, whom the Brave might ſpare,
Muſt fall a certain conqueſt to the Fair.
What Knights did fortune to that glory raiſe,
As from ſo fair a mouth to merit praiſe?
Gun. After Nine days in furious Juſts had paſt,
Each Courage grew more prodigall: the Laſt,
The ſport ſo hot, ſhockt our relenting ſight,
Which ſcarce could bear the Terrible delight.
Each Nation then their pride abated found,
Their boldeſt Knights were ſtrow'd upon the ground.
There *Spaniards* low were with new ſtiffneſs laid;
And there the *Germans* luſty Limms were ſpread.
There *Oſmin* lay, his eye-balls roll'd in death;
And there *Almanzor* grinning for new breath:
Too late repenting, they from *Africk* came
So far, in queſt of an uncertain Fame.

Their mighty Victour was for *Edgar* known,
By his addreſs through his diſguiſe that ſhone.
Edi. That was not *Edgar*; he, by *Edgar* dar'd,
With Spear reverſt his low reſpects preferr'd:
Unknown he came, unknown he left the Field,
And did the prize, to thoſe he vanquiſh'd, yield.
Gun. When boaſting *Ethelwold* was headlong thrown,
Your favours ſtraight the Stranger's arms did crown:
You did his Spear ſo eminently grace, [*To* Ed.
Your Ring for meaner trophies left no place.
Lew. That ſtranger Knight invok'd *Editha*'s name;
And ow'd his Conqueſt, where he own'd his Flame.
Edi. His ſecrets by ſome Magick Line you ſound.
Lew. The Magick is all in this Circle bound. [*Shews a ring.*

SCENE IV.

Enter Serjeants and Souldiers ſeiſe Lewis.

Serj. You muſt to priſon———
Lew. ——— ———What's the hainous Crime?
Serj. Ask *Ethelwold*, and learn the reſt of him.
Lew. Vertue renounce, and Gallantry abjure,
Since they are not in *Engliſh* Courts ſecure. {*They carry him off.*

SCENE V.

Edi. If here brave Strangers thus are entertain'd,
All men muſt fly th' inhoſpitable Land;
Avoid our ſhore, and in the Storms at Sea,
'Mongſt Sands and Rocks find more humanitie.
Gun. This hour be rac'd from out King *Edgar*'s Reign,
Elſe it might all the other bright days ſtain.
Some Miniſter in this abus'd his Truſt,
For 'tis below a King to be unjuſt.
Edi. Theſe Fav'rites on that Royall power incroach,
No Subject, without Sacriledge, can touch;
And ſtill believe their Thunder idlely ſpends,
But when it ſome illuſtrious Ruin ſends.

Gun. In

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Gun. In this the hand of *Ethelwold* is ſeen,
He acts the King, now that his Daughter's Queen.
Edi. And let her reign, unenvy'd as unprais'd,
To that high rank, in ſpite of Honour, rais'd.
That title on *Gunilda* if beſtow'd,
With Joy I to the dignity had bow'd.
Gun. Betroth'd to *Kenneth*, I for *Scotland* ſail'd,
'Gainſt our intent when adverſe winds prevail'd,
And I by ſtorms was forc'd upon your ſhore;
Where *Edgar*'s Love diſorder'd me yet more.
His Love, for ſo I conſtru'd that Addreſs,
Which did but his Civilities expreſs.
But Heaven diſprov'd that faithleſs change in me,
And, angry, ſmil'd at my Unconſtancy.
Edi. Yet *Kenneth* did, no fault, that errour think,
Or elſe his Love did at the Frailty wink.
And he unchang'd, your wavering purpoſe knew.
And ſomething to his Conſtancy is due.
Gun. I ignorant ſtill, and conſtant had remain'd,
Had never I the ſight of *England* gain'd.
But here ———
Edi. ———Who here? (ſince *Edgar* claims no place)
Who here, that can your vow'd affections preſs?
Or *Kenneth*'s firſt, and juſteſt Title ſhake?
Gun. Thoſe vows, and ties, how eaſily *Edgar* brake?
And here, ſince *Edgar* from that Conqueſt fled,
Are others not unworthy to ſucceed,
Who may conſummate, what he but begun.
Edi. The Queen—I muſt her hated preſence ſhun.

Exeunt.

SCENE VI.

Enter Ethelgede *and Women.*

Ethelg. Stars, ever in this kind poſition reſt;
And Fortune, be thy giddy turnings ceaſt:
Now fix thy Wheel, and ſet it by to ruſt.
Once, it appears, thou art to Merit Juſt.

Was

Was Fortune blind, when ſhe beſtow'd this grace?
Never was Crown ſo fitted with a face. *Looks in a glaſs.*
From every Look I glance a conquering dart,
At every Step I trample on a Heart.
An Air of greatneſs in each feature reigns,
And Royall bloud diſtends my Nobler veins.
My Soul is great, and now, each thought grown big,
Begins to labour with ſome State intrigue.
—*Editha* ſhall ſubmit that haughty brow,
—Shall underſtand ſhe is my Subject now.
Such Inſolencies——Let it not be ſaid,
A Diadem e're adorn'd this Royall head;
Let not this body iſſue bear, that may *Enter* Ethelwold
In after-times the *Engliſh* Scepter ſway; *and* Alfrid.
Never of me let Infant King be born,
If I forget her ill-diſſembled ſcorn.
Father, (for I ſtill the Relation own, [*To* Ethelwold.
Though, in effect, we with Crown'd heads have none,)
Father——

SCENE VII.

Ethelw. ——I have not Leiſure now to hear,
My mind is ſtung with a more preſſing Care.

Exeunt Queen, &c.

Alfr. Your Cares ſeem mixt with an unkind allay,
And ſymptoms of a ſickning Love betray.
Ethel. Should you be ſeen, nought can my fate repell:
I know that face, and know the King too well.
Alfr. You, knowing theſe, in doubt my vertue call.
Ethel. Rather my life, on which the ſtorm muſt fall;
'Gainſt which you *Edgar*'s certain Fury whet:
You caus'd my Crime, and now would puniſh it.
Oh that you lay in ſome dark village chain'd,
And there, remote, of Marriage-bonds complain'd.
But always Fate, Man's downfall when decreed,
Puts out his eyes, and blinds us e're we bleed.
Alfr. Your mind appearing in this Doubtfull dreſs,
The worſt (if known) could terrifie me leſs.

Ethel. My

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Ethel. My death (will that ſuffice you?) is the worſt.
Be Women, and their witchcraft, Beauty, curſt.
Beauty, thou pois'nous Flower! thou painted skin!
Frailty without, and Impotence within!
Vain wandring Meteor, which, ſo ſoon as known,
Art loſt! thou glow'ſt, ſeduceſt, and art gone.
Light, which doſt more then thickeſt darkneſs blind!
Angel in ſhew, but in effect a Fiend!
From Paradiſe, where Golden Freedom ſhines,
Thou ſend'ſt to dig and drudge in endleſs mines.
Alfr. You fret, ſuſpect, complain, accuſe, inveigh,
Whilſt ignorant, in guilty paths I ſtray.
Some grief the quiet of your breaſt controuls,
In it, there ſome uneaſie ſecret rouls;
From thence alone this ſtrange diſtraction ſprings.
Ethel. Then out it flies—my Love ſhall lend it wings—
Take it——but yet, it is ſo near my Life,
Both go together———
Alfr. ————Safely to your Wife,
For ſo the Prieſt hath call'd me———
Ethelw. ————Then I'll trie
Your Love, or, having made confeſſion, die.
The King by fame did of your Beauty hear,
And *Alfred*'s name chim'd ſweetly in his ear.
Each day did your Perfections more unfold,
And every day were greater wonders told.
With this Renown he was ſo far poſſeſt,
Unſeen, you were admitted to his breaſt.
But leſt a Love from ſome miſtake might grow,
He ſends expreſs the certainty to know.
I was his Favourite to that degree,
That he repos'd this Confidence in me.
With Loyall thoughts, and Juſt intentions fraught,
I came—I ſaw, and Loyalty forgot.
Thus treacherous made, I back return to Court,
Swifter (and ſurely falſer) then Report.
Said I, The proſpect is at diſtance fair,
But undeceives, who-ever views it near.
Some handſome features are in *Alfred* ſeen,
But theſe diſgrac'd by an uncomely meen.

The

The Brow ſerene, and a bright rolling Eye;
But then the Noſe ſtands fair for Raillery.
And though her Lip with invitation ſwells,
Th' approach one ſally of her Breath repells.
But yet the Women of her Shape, and Face,
May well enough for Countrey Beauties paſs.
Thus I with Fame in nothing did accord,
My Tongue blaſpheming what my Heart ador'd:
And by this Artifice did ſo work, and move
The King, that he conſented to my Love:
Which I pretended was by Intereſt led,
That ſo I might the heir of *Cornwall* wed.

Alfr. At once to wrong me, yet to Love pretend!
I judg'd the ſame a Lover, and a Friend.
Perhaps in truth, theſe blemiſhes you find,
And rambling Fame, that talk'd ſo loud, was blind.
The beſt is, if this Face a Tempeſt raiſe,
One ſally of my Breath will all appeaſe.
That, if you reſt from other Crimes ſecure,
You ſafely may the ſhock of this endure.

Ethelw. Still fatally to my deſtruction bent!
Vain Woman, go, purſue your dire intent.

Alfr. The King may yet ſome ſmall ſuſpicions bear,
One ſight of me thoſe dangerous doubts will clear.

Ethelw. Your beauty who denies, denies the Sun.
To your large Glaſs have I not ſeen you run,
There all intent intemperately gaze,
Fill your ſtretch'd eyes with the reflected rays,
And in that luxury conſume the day,
Till drunk with the ſweet draught you reel'd away?

Alfr. I might my beauty prize in ſome degree,
When I your love and low reſpects did ſee.
That Conqueſt ſeem'd a Miracle for me.
Nor might I think that *England* can afford
Then *Ethelwold* a more illuſtrious Lord.

Ethelw. O tongue too ſubtle for a Lover's heart!
Let us divide, and both ſubmit in part.
Be you content, your ſelf unſeen, to ſee,
And I indulge your curioſity.

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Cover thoſe Beams, and let that natural Light,
Obſcur'd by Art, leſs fiercely ſtrike the Sight.
My Crime may lurk beneath your Twilight-ray;
Laid open, you diſcovering all your Day.
Your Face diſguis'd, I may ſecurely paſs.
Alfr. With what foul Blots would you Heav'ns gifts diſgrace?
Heav'ns, that in earneſt angry oft retort
What we affect, or counterfeit in ſport.
Ethelw. Vexatious ſtill—Diſpute not, but obey.
Alfr. To my Obedience my Diſputes make way.
Let me your Grief and worſt Misfortunes ſhare:
But Fraud and Wrong, I dare not tamper there.
Ethelw. Howe're you to your Face allow no part,
Your many words declare you falſe at Heart.
Scarce are we joyn'd, the Marriage-knot ſcarce ty'd,
How many Jarrs and Jealouſies divide?
Blaze on, dire Comet—may thy Influence be
To Crowns and Empires fatall, as to me.
Alfr. Whither do your raſh words and paſſion fly?
To calm your mind, my utmoſt power I'll try.
If I receive advantage from my Dreſs,
'Tis that I you might with advantage pleaſe.
If, wanting this, your Love be not impair'd,
Theſe Ornaments I readily diſcard. [*Pulls off her Patches.*
Ethelw. Thoſe Trifles did your Beauty but rebate.
If this be all you'll doe, how deſperate is my ſtate!
Pull out thoſe Eyes—and then my work is done.
To what extremes will my reſentment run! {*Pulls her away.*
{ *Exeunt.*

SCENE VIII.

Queen returns with Women.

Ethelg. Shew not my Nuptialls now to *England* more
Then *Syria*, *Greece*, or *Rome* e're ſaw before?
More Kings their Homage to my *Edgar* pay,
Then Planets to the Monarch of the Day.
He ſits on high, illuſtrious and large:
They blow, and tugg and launch along his Barge.

SCENE IX.

The King in a Triumphant Barge appears within the Scenes, rowed by eight Kings towards the Stage, &c. *The Kings enter in proceſſion with their gilded Oars*; *after them* Edgar, *with* Alfrid *in his hand, his eyes fixt on her*, Ethelwold *behind. The Kings ſucceſſively ſalute* Edgar.

1. *King.* The Hands that lately ſhining Scepters bore,
Learning new tasks, are bliſter'd with the Oar.
A Homage ever ſhall be paid by me
To him that rules and that defends the Sea.

2. *King.* His part of Earth to every Prince is due;
Whilſt on the Waters none is King but You.

3. *King.* In narrow bounds are our Dominions pent.
The ſtrongeſt Winds fall dead, their laſt breath ſpent,
E're they attain your Empire's vaſt extent.

4. *King.* The ſpacious Heaven and Nature's care ſcarce ſtretch
So far, as your immenſe Dominions reach.

5. *King.* Nothing is ſeen that your large Power confines,
Except in Globes imaginary Lines.

6. *King.* What Nation dares your Dictates diſobey?
He ſhakes the Earth, who can the Ocean ſway.

7. *King.* Your Sea, (without you) to aſſert your Power,
Invades and conquers the rebellious Shore;
Stretches its ſwelling Arms, and graſps each Land,
And combats all that own not your Command.

8. *King.* Your Sails muſt lowr when Winds and Storms are high,
And on the Water all but Heav'n defie.

Edgar. What art thou? from whence? what far-diſtant Coaſt
Sends thee, proud Spoils and vanquiſht Kings to boaſt? [*To* Alfrid.
Thoſe Eyes do all our Pomp and Glory brave,
And in the midſt of Triumph make me Slave.
Now all the Homage which was lately paid,
By me reſign'd, at your fair Feet is laid.
From what height is my Pride untimely thrown!
Snow, which ſome lofty Mountain's head doth crown,
When the South-wind's warm breath once iſſues forth,
Thus ſhrinks, diſſolves, and ſinks into the Earth.

Why

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Why was this Face, or why not ſooner ſeen?
Yet after all thou ſhalt be — thou art Queen——
Speak, Nymph——aſſwage my pain——
Alfr. ——————So new a thing
It is for me to ſee or hear a King,
My Eye's too weak to look on Majeſty;
And Tongue unskill'd to faſhion a Reply.
Edg. Proceed, ſweet Harm'nie—Let your Tongue Love ſing,
And your tun'd Heart conſent in every ſtring.
Let every Senſe to Love's ſoft Charms incline.
Alfr. Might I preſume, or any thing define,
Your words ſeem aim'd at one in equal Sphere,
And ill deſcend into a Subject's ear.
Unfit for Love, we dread your Majeſtie,
And low to that, at diſtance, proſtrate lie.
Edg. All Majeſty and Diſtance I diſown:
If Subject born, you are my Sovereign grown.
You, all Divine, with radiant Beauty crown'd,
In me the very thought of Power confound.
Pardon, bright Form, if I approach too near,
A ſudden, raw, unpractis'd Worſhipper.
Alfr. If Beauty were a thing to be ador'd,
England would be, like barbarous *Egypt*, ſtor'd.
In every Grange you might an Idol ſee,
And nothing rare or ſingular in me.
Edg. There's ſomething in you, ſure, divinely rare.
Am I a Slave to every Maid that's fair?
Me you accuſe, your ſelf whilſt you impair.
No common Planets in your Birth were joyn'd,
No Influence for common Fates aſſign'd.
I feel the power—reſiſtleſs—infinite——
Then Majeſty more ſtrong, and more then Beauty ſweet.
My burning Veins prove your full Preſence there,
And my aſtoniſht Soul declares you every-where.
Alfr. 'Tis Glory, Sir, 'tis Glory that inflames
Your mighty Soul, which ſtill of Glory dreams;
Whoſe Image wanders bright before your eyes,
And you to that more nobly ſacrifice.
Thoſe Hymns are not to Humane kind addreſt,
Nor *Edgar*'s Soul to earthly Frames debas't.

Edg. 'Tis my good Angell that I hear and ſee;
My Eyes and Ears confeſs a Deitie.
Yet my Devotions were not pure; the Man, [*Aſide.*
The Earthly part did my Soul's zeal profane:
My Heart conceiv'd a criminal Deſire; } Ethelwold
And guilty Thoughts allay'd the holy Fire. } *takes her*
I doubted, wiſh'd, preſag'd, expected thence, } *away.*
Something more dear, and reliſhing to Senſe.
Forgive me—how?—the heav'nly Viſion's gone. } [*Turns about.*
Glory, thou call'ſt, but whither ſhall I run? }
I'm loſt in Darkneſs and Diſtraction. }

Exeunt all ſave

SCENE X.

Kenneth *ſolus.*

Ken. Go, Brother-homagers, your work is done,
Whilſt reſtleſs I rowl *Siſyphus*'s Stone.
From Toil are free my Hands and outward part;
But ah the Pangs and Labour of my Heart!
The daily Homage to *Gunilda* paid!
I through Diſdains, ſharp Snow and Winter wade.
Yet more I ſtrive, and eagerly perſiſt,
The farther off I tumble from her Breaſt.
Denmark's fair Daughter, onely vow'd to thee
Are all my Cares, my Pride, my Libertie.
O happy *Edgar!* in this Court of thine
The choiceſt Flowers of fartheſt Nations ſhine.
If any Spark in noble breaſts does burn,
Here Gallantry they either ſhew or learn.
The Brave and Fair thy Court do joyntly prove
The Theatre of Honour, and of Love.

Exit.

ACT

Rymer, T.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Garden.

Lewis *and* Kenneth.

Lewis. THE Sentence which for my late Bonds was sign'd,
Did me in fair *Editha's* presence find.
Her nearer Beams did on my Senses beat,
Whilst sick and panting with excessive Heat,
A thousand amorous Thoughts roll'd in my head,
And Cares by Love-disordered Fancy bred.
And there I gave my Liberty for lost,
Fearless of harm from any other Coast.
Ken. Thought he, You tame to an Affront would stand,
Whom Love had chaf'd and heated to his hand.
Lew. But scarce had I in Prison set my Foot,
When a new Sentence came to fetch me out:
From *Ethelwold* it came,———
Tells me, in Field I for th' Affront must pay,
And he resent it this more generous way.
Ken. To's Power that sullen Complement was due;
And this Respect to's Honour, and to you.
Lew. With Power turn'd giddy, insolent he grows;
But scarce (I fear) enough of Honour knows.
Howe're, an edge on my Revenge to set,
He will it thus with Provocations whet.
Arm'd at all points we must the Combat try:
In all I with the Challenger comply.
Ken. The Turnament gave rise to your Dispute,
And he your Cause with proper Arms would suit. *Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.

Edgar *solus.*

Edg. How slow is Time to a Love-tortur'd mind?
The lazie Hour flaggs heavily behind,

Not

Not yet arriv'd. How preſſing are theſe Fires?
I am devour'd by my too keen Deſires.
Is this to be a King? Whom Men obey,
Shall over him a brutiſh Paſſion ſway?
We who controll the greateſt Tyrant Law,
With a ſtern Nod too-buſie Juſtice awe,
Whilſt we our vaſt Prerogatives extoll,
This name of Weakneſs, Woman, humbles all.
What Power hath he, who Slave is to a Frown?
Or is he Sovereign whom a Smile can crown?
I'm ſtill my ſelf, nor is it yet too late,
Nor yet the path too headlong for retreat.
We, too-unſafe, with theſe ſoft Dangers play—
I go—yet ſomething in me bids me ſtay—
I'll ſtay—and, Vertue, I thine aid implore—
No—fooliſh Heart, I'll hazard thee no more.
Who waſt her Conqueſt when untouch'd and ſound,
Shalt not be truſted, now I know thy Wound. *Is going off, meets*

SCENE III.

Ethelwold.

Ethelw. 'Tis well—I take him whilſt his Paſſion boils:
No Lover's eyes can e're deſcry my Toils. [*Aſide.*
Th' unwary Youth ſhall leap into the Net,
And on new Game diſcharge his wanton Heat.
The Arms ſhall cover him, but not defend.
One well-plac'd Blow ſhall all my Troubles end.
The work is eaſie———

Edg. How—*Ethelwold*—hold---one thing e're you go,
Which to my Curioſity I owe.
The Woman whom I at my Landing found
With you, her Eyes in melting Sorrow drown'd,
Who is ſhe?———

Ethelw. ———One deſign'd to ſerve the Queen;
But Baſhfulneſs forbids her to be ſeen.
She ſought a Hiding-place when us you met,
And—I ſtept in, to hinder her retreat.

Edg.

Rymer, T.

Edg. Prevail with her at Court ſome time to ſtay,
And ſoon that Modeſty will wear away.
Is ſhe related to you?———
Ethelw. ———————That agree,
My Carriage elſe would look too rudely free.
But I too long am held from her Defence.
Pardon, dread Sir, with a juſt Heat diſpenſe
On her behalf—I hear the Horſes neigh,
And clanck of Arms upbraiding my delay.
Edg. What Arms? what barbarous Danger threatens her?
What Enemies can ſo much Beauty fear?
Ethelw. When Beauty darts the ſtrongeſt influence,
On Honour's ſide moſt weak is the defence.
Edg. Her Honour queſtion'd?——
Ethelw. ———————Nothing can be true,
Bolts from a mouth that alſo injures you.
Edg. How me? ———
Ethelw. ——'Tis he who in Diſguiſe, ſo late,
To Fortune, at the Juſts, was moſt in debt.
He ſays, t' encounter you was his deſign,
Which your requeſt oblig'd him to decline.
Edg. Madneſs on him doth, with his Pride, increaſe:
The man wants Brain to bear his good Succeſs.
From him ſhe could deſerve no Injurie:
Aſperſing her, th' Affront was aim'd at me;
In her he touches my moſt tender part. [*Aſide.*
She claims my Arms, who challenges my Heart.
Where is the place?———
Ethelw. ———With ſilent Feet we range
Single, unſeen, to ſteal a cold Revenge.
But in broad day, with Trumpets ſound, the rage
Of Armies muſt for injur'd Kings engage.
Edg. I Armies 'gainſt a publick Foe would bring:
This quarrel is with *Edgar*, not the King.
Ethelw. I gave the Challenge, now the Cauſe is mine.
Edg. Your Arguments muſt to my will reſign;
My Arm this Quarrel every way demands,
Nor can I truſt the Cauſe in other hands.
On horſe the fight—the Caſque my Face will hide,
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My Arm this Quarrel every way demands,
Nor can I truſt the Cauſe in other hands.
On horſe the fight—the Caſque my Face will hide,
So better he will my Revenge abide.

And if my better fortune makes him bow,
He may believe the Combate was with you.
The Arms? the Horſe?———
Ethelw. ———Without that door they wait.
Beyond the Elms was our appointment ſet.
But 'tis not fit———
Edg. Leave me——and ſtir not hence. [*Ex.* Edg.

SCENE IV.

Ethelw. *ſolus.*

Ethel. Small Crimes we ſtart at when we firſt begin,
But ſtop at nothing when our hands are in.
The blackeſt Treaſon now to me's no more,
Then was the leaſt Diſloyal thought before.
Love, that blind Guide, firſt led me from the way:
I farther going, farther go aſtray.
Theſe Paths we enter with a tender Foot,
By every Thorn and every Scruple cut;
Thus our firſt Steps: we after boldly tread,
Grown hard, and brawny, and all ſenſe is dead.
Thus from ſmall Errours in the birth and ſeed,
Are Prodigies and horrid Monſters bred.
Having once paſt the Lines of Fit and Juſt,
All farther Law and Reaſon's writ in Duſt:
All farther are but Cyphers to the Summe.
I've a new world of Wickedneſs to come.
Free in my Choice and will, I firſt begun:
But now, by dire Neceſſity dragg'd on,
So far advanc'd, the Danger's to be ſlack:
On Precipices there's no looking back. [*Offers to go. Meets*

SCENE V.

Ethelgede *and* Alfrid.

This way he paſt——'mongſt the dark Shades that Face [*To* Alfr.
Yields a fair Light, his Royall Steps to trace.
You at the firſt encounter reach'd his Heart,
And for your Breaſt there wanted not a Dart.

His

Rymer, T.

His Wounds he doth not unrevenged mourn;
For every Shaft, was made a juſt Return.
Alfr. Lately, my Lord, before our Marriage-vow,
Soft were your Looks, and gentle was your Brow,
And melting Words did all with Sweetneſs flow:
Now, Storms and Troubles in your Eyes I reade,
And in your Face no peacefull Colours ſpread:
And from your Tongue myſterious Language breaks,
Which nought to me, or but your Anger, ſpeaks.
Ethel. We to a fair Appearance raſhly wed,
And never ſee the loathſome Serpent hid.
What you call Myſterie, I might reveal:
Thoſe Myſteries you underſtand too well. *Exit* Ethelw.
Ethelg. You wept——the King was mov'd at your Diſtreſs:
So bright a Nymph, how could a King doe leſs?
Hence 'tis preſum'd that your Deſign prevails:
An Inference that's, like your Beautie, falſe.
Alfr. Let not my Vertue ſhare in the Diſgrace,
However out of Favour is my Face.
But if my Heart could, like my Face, be ſeen,
Your Brow to me might ſtill remain ſerene.
Ethelg. The King intended you his Royal Bride,
Till *Ethelwold* your Beautie's Charms bely'd.
Perſwaded this—you hugg the glittering Dream,
And now ſet up to play your After-game.
Editha never did ſuch things ſuggeſt,
Nor into her Caball the new Deſigner liſt?
Alfr. The King's intent I ſcruple not to own,
From *Ethelwold*, not from *Editha* known.
But for the reſt, your Highneſs what inclines
To judge of me as fit for Court-deſigns?
Ethelg. Oh, none ſo proper, ſo compleatly fit,
Where Malice makes the Inſtrument, not Wit.
How cloſe ſoe're they hatch within your Breaſt,
I'll find them out, or ſhall deſtroy the Neſt.

Exeunt as frighted,
Edg. *and* Lew. *appearing with drawn Swords.*

SCENE VI.

Edgar *and* Lewis *appear within the Scene, and advance to the Stage.*

Lew. When your rais'd Viſour did your Face betray,
And I perceiv'd 'twas at your Feet I lay,
That chance my flying ſpirits did recall,
And then I ſeem'd to triumph in my Fall.
And with warm heart I thank'd the Heavenly powers,
Since yet no Arms e're vanquiſh'd me but yours.
But what moſt deep my troubled heart have pierc't,
Are thoſe falſe Rumours *Ethelwold* diſperſt:
They wound me ſtill———
Edg. ———————I cannot but confide,
And truſt your words, having your Valour try'd.
Lying, a low and recreant Mind declares,
For every man will ſpeak the Truth who dares.
Nor doth the Armour, try'd, appear of proof.
Lew. That, that alone is evidence enough
'Gainſt him, in ſtead of having Safety thence:
'Twas your Addreſs defended your Defence.
He comes———
Edg. My Guards too to his party drawn——
Lew. Yet in your Cauſe you ſhall not die alone.
The Life you gave ſhall be as freely ſpent.
Edg. Rule your brave Heat, till ſure of their intent.

SCENE VII.

Enter Ethelwold, *Guards.*

Are theſe our Guards? or your confederate Crew? [*To* Ethelw.
Intend you Force, or would vain Fraud purſue?
Ethelw. Death in no form ſo terrible appears, { *Kneeling preſents his Sword.*
As doth that Face which your Diſpleaſure bears.
How can I ſee, and how ſuſtain that Brow,
At me which never levell'd Frown till now?
I am condemn'd; I know what Doubts infeſt;
I ſee the black inextricable Miſt,

Which

Rymer, T.

Which round my labouring Innocence is ſpred:
And yet the worſt, your Ear is from me fled.
Edg. My Ear is not to your Defence refus'd,
Yet muſt not be by a vain Cant abus'd.
With leſs Regret I others Treaſon hear, [*To* Ethelwold.
Then but, in you, the leaſt Suſpicion bear.
In all important Pleaſures, you had part,
Sharing at once my Kingdom and my Heart.
How many Nobles did his Piques diſplace,
Who, now retir'd, live murmuring in Diſgrace?
Wilmott his place, nor *Cavendiſh* had loſt,
If I in ought could *Ethelwold* have croſt.
As Earth Heav'ns Favours, theſe ours entertain;
Send back unwholſome Vapours for our Rain.
Thus men to whom Proſperity is ſtale,
Deſpiſe that Heav'n whence they deriv'd it all.
Puft up, and grown by long Indulgence proud,
That makes them Atheiſts, which ſhould make them good.
Friendſhip is amongſt Equals onely fixt,
And Kindneſſes reciprocally mixt.
Whilſt ſtill on us the Counterfeit impoſe,
The Regall State no reall Friendſhip knows.
All Friendſhip here is in vile Flattery loſt.
A Friend's a Jewel that no Crown can boaſt.
But tax not my proceedings as unkind, [*To* Ethelwold.
If you, till I know farther, be confin'd.
Ethelg. 'Tis the Queen's Father you to priſon ſend. } *Enter Queen, Alfrid. The Guards take off Ethelwold. The Queen ſteps in and releaſes him.*
Edg. And more then all Relation, 'tis my Friend.
Ethelg. This ominous on our Nuptiall-day muſt be.
Edg. 'Tis ominous, but to our Enemie.
But think not that with Rigour I proceed:
For if your Heart is troubled, mine doth bleed.

Exeunt Queen, &c.

SCENE VIII.

Again in Tears? whence ſprings this fatall Grief?
Can I? can all my Kingdoms give relief? [*To* Alfr.
This ſight alone would all my Joys controul.
How every Drop falls bitter on my Soul!

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Alfr. Can *Ethelwold* have merited your Hate,
And I not have my portion in his fate?
Edgar. Recall him—had the bloud of Kings been ſpilt,
Thoſe Tears would purge and expiate the Guilt.
Behold the Wretch through your Compaſſion free'd. } *Ethelwold is*
Yet more then he, (alas!) I your pity need. } *brought back.*
My Soul enthrall'd—and Senſes all reſtrain'd—
My Tongue ſticks faſt—my very Words are chain'd—
A Fire within devours me: yet muſt I
To you alone, to you who kill me, fly,—
And onely there expect my Remedie—
Alfr. If I may anſwer Language thus obſcure,
I cannot own the faculty to cure
Thoſe Pains and that Diſtemper you endure.
Edg. Love is my Pain, my ſole Diſtemper Love:
But anſwer this, and all my Griefs remove.
Alfr. My humble ſtate cannot this Honour bear,
Nor underſtand what now I ſeem to hear.
Howe're, your Trouble ſince within you find,
Vertue's the onely Phyſick for the Mind.
Edg. Whate're Diſtemper does the Mind infeſt,
Firſt from the Body is deriv'd the Peſt.
And for the Cure no other method's known;
The Cure begins where the Diſeaſe begun.
Alfr. You in a heat too raſhly that prefer,
Which cooler thoughts would inſtantly abhor.
And, for a ſeeming Ill, your vain Relief
A reall turns, and more outrageous Grief.
Edg. We two ſhall meet, yet not from Vertue ſtray;
Though to my Joys dark and unknown's the way.
Something Divine, ſome Inſpiration fills,
And my fir'd Breaſt a ſacred Fury ſwells.
By Love, or ſome more gentle Muſe, poſſeſt,
I propheſie my ſelf, in your Embraces, bleſt.
Alfr. This would ſound ſweet, where a Belief might riſe:
My Heart is deaf t' Impoſſibilities.
You by firm Bands from theſe Deſires are ty'd, [*To* Edg.
And me no weaker Obſtacles divide.
Such Difficulties, ne're to be ſurpaſt,
And rigid Bars, by Fate betwixt us caſt;

Law,

R242 3
Rymer, T.

Law, Juſtice, Honour, all oppoſe this Love:
And there's no Faith that may ſuch Rocks remove.
Edg. I know the Rampires that obſtruct my Will;
Yet with more rage does the wild Torrent ſwell.
Ye Powers, what have you done?—in this true Bleſſing croſt,
On me are all your ſplendid Trifles loſt.
King of the Iſles, and of whole *Albion* crown'd,
And Maſter far of the vaſt Seas around,
Thus great I reign, if in her Favour bleſt:
But that deny'd, no Sweets of Power I taſte;
Wretched, forlorn, in Woods condemn'd to pine,
Exil'd, where no kind Ray of Heav'n can ſhine.
Alfr. I cannot make your days more clear or bright,
Nor to the Sun, a Glo-worm, promiſe Light.
No humane Excellence that ſtrange power can claim,
Nor you for me theſe great Idea's frame.
Edg. What is all Power, if it to Love muſt bow?
Or what, indeed, is all of Heav'n we know,
But Love? All Happineſs in Love alone
Is plac'd; 'tis there the Bleſſed fix their Throne.
Ethelw. Furies! muſt I a tame Spectatour ſtand?
Did he for this from Priſon me remand? [*Aſide.*
Am I from a leſs painfull Rack releaſt,
Thus to be tortur'd? Howſoe're diſgrac't, [*To* Edg.
Howe're obnoxious judg'd, yet Truth is bold.
The Breath that marry'd you is yet ſcarce cold,
And yet your Actions threaten a Divorce.
A Tyrant's Sword the Gordian Knot may force.
Your Royall Grace was taught another Law—
Edg. Of which you ſhall the Rigour undergo—
Take—take the Traitour hence----muſt you upbraid— } *Walks a*
You check my will ——— } *turn.*
Bring back the Duke—How did I urge a Crime,
Which I before, ſo late, had pardon'd him?
I own the Truth that he declar'd, I own
I have ſome raſh impetuous Tranſports ſhown.
They ſprang from no approv'd or certain Cauſe;
For, without Thought, a ſudden Paſſion roſe,
Boiſterous, and high, no place for Reaſon left;
All helpleſs ran 'fore the fierce Storm adrift.

But

But Reaſon now makes head, at th' helm employ'd;
And my Deſires to the vow'd Port will guide.
I moving towards my Queen——as on the Sea,
Think the fair Land behind goes back from me——
Whether the Foot——goes forward, or beguiles
My ſenſe——I'm ſure the ſtubborn Heart recoils. [*Exit.*

SCENE IX.

Alfrid *ſola.*

How ſhall I the obſcure nice Track diſcern?
Or where this high undaunted Conduct learn?
A ſilent Shame weighs down my face, and I,
As guilty, from who-e're approaches fly. [*Exit.*

SCENE X.

Lewis *and* Editha.

Lew. Your Eyes, that make the proudeſt Victours bow, { *To* Editha *turning from him.*
And ſhake the Lawrells on their haughty Brow,
Behold us, as unworthy of your Charms,
Who could ſubmit to any other Arms.
Editha. Oft is a King pufft with undue Succeſs,
When Flatterers, his Courage to careſs,
Unforc'd are beaten.——
Lewis. ——*Edgar*'s cloſe Diſguiſe
Left here no room for that unjuſt Surmiſe.
But 'tis more Glory by his hands to fall,
Then in a meaner Crowd to conquer all:
And what-e're Praiſe to *Edgar*'s Arms is due,
Fate brought me to be vanquiſh't firſt by you.
Editha. The Victour with ſmall Triumph would be grac't,
Except with him more Courage you profeſt.
But you purſue your Libertie too far:
With me your onely ſafe Diſcourſe is War.
Lew. War I might with leſs fear and danger move:
But all are here the certain Spoils of Love.
Love ſways my Tongue——

Editha.

Rymer, T.

Editha. ———Love is a Crime reveal'd;
When written in the Heart, the Lips muſt ſtill be ſeal'd.
Lew. But Love, how-e're induſtriouſly hid,
Breaks out, in all our Looks and Actions read.
Editha. More eaſily ſmalleſt Cyphers ſome diſcern,
Then others largeſt Characters can learn.
But do not raſhly to my Rank commit
What never was for our peruſall fit:
Leſt that unlicens'd to your Ruine turn,
And juſter Flames your wretched Labours burn.
Lew. Who want your real and unqueſtion'd Worth,
May glory that Queens travell'd at their Birth.
What wants in Heart, in their proud Veins does flow:
And Bloud they boaſt, their Vertue ebbing low.
Others in this, as Equalls, may conteſt;
Whilſt you'r alone and matchleſs in the reſt.
If Royall Lineage authorize a Flame,
You cannot then our juſt Ambition blame.
The man for whom I'm bold to mention Love,
Is from a Crown at moſt but one Remove.
Editha. Who is not King, holds but a Subject's place.
From Crowns the very firſt Remove is baſe.
Lewis. But were he King, and of a Throne poſſeſt,——
Edith. That, onely, were no Title to my Breaſt.
Were he ſo great, and your Suppoſal true,
He then might claim a Liberty to ſue,
And at my Feet his Royaltie depoſe,
Whilſt I ſhall weigh the Merits of his Cauſe.
But if you wiſh a proſperous Embaſſie,
Let me my Love firſt on his Picture trie.
Then blazon the renown'd Originall,
Proclaim his Sovereign Titles then ———
Lew. ——————————I ſhall
Obey, and trace the method you command:
For to the Eyes Love his firſt Shafts muſt ſend.

Exit Lewis.

Edith. Whilſt a raſh Flame was in his Breaſt ſurmis'd,
I 'gainſt his Folly a juſt Anger pois'd.
I coveted a cauſe to ſeem ſevere,
And too much wiſh'd what I did vainly fear.

Too

Too mean and humble for that brave Offence,
He onely is ambitious for his Prince——
Intreat the Stranger back——I will explore
His Breaſt, and ſearch all the dark Volume o're, {*To Women who go off.*
To learn the Secret out. He from a King
Might Confidence and free Expreſſions bring——
Looks ſo engag'd—and Words ſo nicely turn'd,— [Lewis *returns.*
Prove——he his own (a nearer Paſſion) mourn'd.
Is your own Heart ſecure, whilſt 'tis alledg'd, [*To* Lewis.
Your Cares are on another ſcore engag'd?
Symptoms appear, as though your ſelf endure
Some Pain. Declare, is your own Heart ſecure?
Lew. Surpriz'd it pants, and trembles to be ſearch't,
Amongſt ſo many blazing Beauties ſcorch't.
Edi. Many may ſpread a harmleſs lambent blaze,
And all, without the flaſhy Meteor plays,
And (till in one contracted) hath no force.
'Tis onely a particular can pierce.
To me reveal that Fair particular.
Sometimes it may be Prudence to declare.
However, Courage often better ſpeeds:
Cold Prudence thinking ſtands, whilſt Courage vaults to deeds.
Lew. Climbing too high, from an ignoble Root,
Courage turn'd rank, doth into Raſhneſs ſhoot.
Edi. In happy Climates, by a warmer Sun,
To a new height Plants, without fault, may run.
But to be plain——you know your ſelf eſteem'd——
Lew. Alas!——
Edi. Confeſs—and venture to be blam'd.
Lew. My Courage ſtarts——Love is a Crime reveal'd.
Edi. But, undiſcover'd, can a Wound be heal'd?
Lew. Theſe Favours daunt me more, then when her Brow
Did with the hotteſt Indignation glow. [*Aſide.*
Much more this ſudden Floud doth me confound,
Then by Deſpair when lately run a-ground.
Fears preſs my Hopes, and Hopes confront my Fears,
Moſt in the dark, when moſt the Light appears.
Edi. Conſiderate and ſlow, why this Delay?
Love on ſtretch'd wings impatient ſpeeds his way.

Lew.

R2423
Rymer, T.

Lew. Let me not ſpeak, (a Rudeneſs you abhorre)
But at my diſtance ſilently adore.
Edi. Suſpect no Pale, or nicer Diſtance ſet:
In the mid ſpace two equall Flames will meet.
But I miſtake your Breaſt—Love reigns not there.
What is it thus that clogs your Tongue?—
Lew. ——————Deſpair.
Edi. Some Hopes, I thought, from my Indulgence ſent,
Might bloom, and ſtrow the way to your Content.
A Princeſs woes in vain—— [*Turns from him.*
Lew. ——————Too wretched I,
And ill-proportion'd for the mighty Joy
That rounds mine ear! what Dream deludes my ſenſe?
Edi. No Colour may excuſe your long Suſpence. {Gunilda *appears and enters.*
Yet more t' upbraid your Incredulity,
What was declar'd, her Hand ſhall ratifie.
Lew. Oh happy day! ——
Edi. ——*Gunilda*, lend your Hand— {*Gives him* Gunilda's *hand.*
Thus I perform ——
Exit.

SCENE XI.

Lew. ——How all amaz'd I ſtand!——
Gun. Confus'd and ſtupid I!——
Lew. ——————And ſhe is gone
E're her Intent, her dark Intent, is known.
And I, in Juſtice, ſcruple to receive
What ſhe might want Authority to give.
Gun. Few, when once ſeis'd, will their Poſſeſſion quit,
And nicely weigh the equitable Right.
Your Eyes a fairer Purchace had deſign'd.
Lew. My Eyes, my every Faculty is blind.
In a dead Sea perplext I float, nor know
I on what Shore m' abandon'd Thoughts to throw.
Gun. All here to flatter your Deſires agree:
Where can your Hopes deſign a calmer Sea?
Nor lies the Haven far remote. But you,
I fear, a raſh forbidden Courſe purſue.

Go—Leave me—*Kenneth* ſaw us from a-far, [*Exit* Lewis.
And 'gainſt us, as Confederates, brings War.
Till known what Courſe the Stranger aims to take,
With *Kenneth* I ſome Breach muſt find, or make.

SCENE XII.

Enter Kenneth.

Ken. Guilty again—condemn'd ſo late before—
She in my Friend do's a new Love explore.
Falſe—falſe—a ſecond time—But raſhly I [*Aſide.*
Unchain a Thought that out to Rage would flie.
Here I ſhall Homage pay with leſs regret, [*To her.*
Since here are all my centred Wiſhes met.
My Glory—my *Gunilda*—here is found.

Gun. Your Triumph drives on an ill-choſen ground.
What Glory, or what Miſtreſs yours is made
By Deeds ſo mean?———

Ken. ———What Fact would you upbraid?

Gun. Your Royall name no baſe Submiſſions blot,
The Pageantry—and painted Oar forgot—
I ſaw you not with red-ſwoln Fingers row,
And o're vile Labour hang your ſweating Brow.
I nothing can reproach———

Ken. ———I *Lewis* fear,
And a falſe Friend in your Reproaches hear.
Blinded by him, my Actions you deface,
And in my room an odious Image place.
Him my Revenge ſhall inſtantly purſue.

Exit.

SCENE XIII.

Gunilda. I chuſe, repent, refuſe, and chuſe agen:
This Pulſe beats Love, the next a cold Diſdain.
I contradict, before I fully ſpeak;
And e're half bent, my Reſolutions break.
Each fair Deſign I ruine in the bud:
Then, onely what I had condemn'd, think good.

No,

No ſooner in my Breaſt a Thought can riſe,
But others ſpring and catch it as it flies.
So hot my Head, what-ever enters there
But whizzes, and ſtraight vaniſhes to Air.
If ought more tough to an Opinion grows,
Away that Bubble the firſt Whiſper blows.
My Soul is perfect Diſcord; Chance, not Skill,
My Choice, and but the Shadow of a Will.
Dreams are more real: to that Point I ſail;
But veer again with the next breathing Gale,
Whilſt a new Calenture my Senſe do's mock:
For every Courſe I ſteer preſents a Rock.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Bedchamber.

Alfrid *leaning aſleep with a Lute in hand, her Woman ſings.*

THE SONG.

AH! lay by your Lute;
Ah, Lucaſia! *forbear.*
Whilſt your Tongue I may hear,
Other Muſick is mute.
Ah! lay by your Lute.
For the Heav'ns have decreed, that my Heart ſhould ſubmit
To none but the Charms of your Wit.

The Conflict was hot,
When I firſt met your Eyes;
Yet my Heart would ſtill riſe,
Though through and through ſhot.
The Conflict was hot.
But your Wit's great Artillery when drawn to the field,
Oh then 'twas my glory to yield.

To ſatisfie all,
When an Empire is due
To each Beauty in you,
The World is too ſmall,
To ſatisfie all.
With the reſt you in Triumph ſhall ſit and ſurvey;
But give Wit all the Spoils of the day.

Alfr. I tremble—Shadows I too highly rate. {Alfrid *waking ſtarts up.*
'Tis but a Dream—yet often Dreams have weight.
That night e're firſt I *Ethelwold* beheld,
Theſe Images my wondring Fancy fill'd:
And now repeated, may Prophetick ſeem.
Wom. And now repeated are but ſtill a Dream.
If any Reall Trouble croſt your way,
You would not with Imaginary ſtay.
But with what Face was this ſtrange Viſion ſeen?
Alfr. As I in a green Valley walkt alone,
A brighter Day and Lightning round me ſhone.
Surpriz'd, and lifting up my troubled Eyes,
Behold an Eagle towring in the Skies.
Of Birds a numerous train, that on him wait,
Clapping their Wings, ſeem'd to applaud his State.
In his fierce Talons he a Crown did bear,
Traverſing oft, and beating in the Air.
At laſt his motion towards me was bent,
Who trembling ſtood, expecting the Event.
When two great Ravens, with a haſty flight,
Struck in between, and barr'd my eager ſight.
One upwards, th' other towards me did take,
And o're my Head his huge black Wings did ſhake.
Wom. This frighted you, and with the Fright you wake.
Alfr. Theſe Ravens after both fell at my Feet,
And on my Head the Diadem was ſet.
Wom. Thoſe winged Creatures of your Dream are gone,
And all the Fate, that they portended, flown.
Yet vainly you in tranſient Scenes of Air
Seek ground whereon to build your Hope, or Fear.
Rather your thoughts on that late Favour place. {*Pointing at a Jewell.*
That Jewell bears a more Prophetick face,

And

And ſhews more like the earneſt of a Crown.
Alfr. I have not yet that wild Ambition known;
Nor did I think this Preſent from the King
Could on me an unfriendly Cenſure bring.
It ſhall no more offend a jealous eye. [*Puts it in her boſome.*

SCENE II.

Enter Ethelwold *and* Ethelgede.

Ethelg. To this bright Face you owe your Liberty. { *Pointing*
Thus from her Frailty precious Merit grows, { *at* Alfrid.
And She her Honour piouſly beſtows.
Alfr. If his Releaſe was granted at my Suit,
Blame not the Tree, ſince you approve the Fruit.
Nor to a Crime imputing the Succeſs,
Make the King's Favour, or my Vertue, leſs.
Ethelw. Curſe on the Favours married Women boaſt!
Thus they grow rich, but to the Husband's coſt.
What ſeems free Gift, ſhe in the dark muſt earn;
For what ſhe takes, engag'd to make return.
And wanting Subſtance otherwiſe to pay't,
Her Body lies obnoxious for the Debt.
Ethelg. Denying now, Ungratefull you remain:
And that's a Vice muſt not your Beauty ſtain.
Alfr. My Gratitude to nothing can enjoin
Whence you, or ſtricteſt Vertue, may repine.
The Bounty that do's flow from God and Kings,
Not from Deſign, but their high Nature ſprings.
Nor do they with their Gift convey a Snare;
Or make a Prey, when ſeeming to prefer.
Ethelw. Your Kings, howe're reſembling Gods above,
Ungodded, are like Mortalls in their Love.
My work ſhall be to break your Traffick there.
You think the Court a Market for the Fair.

Exeunt Ethelwold *and* Ethelgede.

SCENE

SCENE III.

Alfr. How black do my beſt Actions turn? I ſow
Sweet Flowers and Odours, but dire Mandrakes grow.
A ſtrange Infection from my Breath is ſpread,
And Serpents riſe from whereſoe're I tread.
A perverſe Influence did our Nuptialls ſway,
And a bad Angel govern'd all the day.
Check'd by a Parent's unreſolved Frown,
(Which flowing Smiles did overtake and drown)
I thought my ſelf to rigorous Duty ty'd,
Er'e I this Marriage-diſcipline had try'd.
From the firſt Ship thus was the Dove ſent out,
When onely Death and Deluge rag'd about.
Here Envy me, there Jealouſies infeſt;
There I'm by Love, the greateſt Danger, preſt.
Too far that Siren do's m' Attention move.
But who is deaf when Kings profeſs their Love?
The Storm ſtill thickens, yet no Port I find:
Death, at the worſt, is to the Wretched kind.
Death from all other Dangers will ſecure— [*She mingles poiſon.*
Death is the leaſt of Ills I can endure:
And Death is ready———

Wom. ———What is here deſign'd?
To what extremes flies her diſtracted Mind?
I will call help—— *Exit Wo.*

Alfr. I'll not be ſo unprovidently chaſt—
Severe, like *Lucrece*, when the Crime is paſt.
Better with timely care the Stain prevent,
Then halt after with tardy Puniſhment.
Not that (like her) I think a *Tarquin* near:
I rather Force from m' Inclinations fear—
And leſt I might be my own Raviſher—
But 'gainſt this Madneſs and irregular Heat
I have a Cure, and ready a Receipt———
Love's Julep, ſovereign Antidote of Shame, *Looks on the glaſs of poiſon.*
Wine—of the Soul—thou, the Ethereal Flame
Quenching, an Earthly kindleſt—Hence I ſoar
Above—Drink this—I'm mortal then no more—

That

That Tie—which cauſes *Ethelwold* ſuch Pain,
This will diſſolve, and ſet him Free again.
The Queen no more my Innocence ſhall tax,
Or Vertue, by her rude Suſpicions, vex.
The King no more—When on the King I think,
Ah now!—'tis truly Poiſon that I drink—
This Life if any Charm or Filter bind,
That Charm and Filter in the King I find.
My Soul to him ſome ſecret Magick ties:
My Soul, when from him parted,—truly dies—
For him alone I prize the Sun and Light:
Cloſing my Eyes, Death ſhuts him from my ſight.
Often, how often have I heard it told?
(Which made vain heads in their Preſages bold.)
And if the Honour were not ſingular,
All will allow the Circumſtances rare.
When he, yet young, (the thirteenth year ſcarce gain'd)
Did Surety for me at my Baptiſm ſtand,
The Biſhop did no ſooner *Alfrid* name,
But *Edgar*'s Eyes and Cheeks were ſhot with flame:
Till falling Drops of Bloud took off the Heat:
Then pale he turn'd, and ſigh'd, and *Alfrid* did repeat.
My Innocence the early Tincture knew,
And ſecret Love with my Religion grew.
Dear Pledge—— *Weeps looking on a Jewel.*
On how unſure and ſlippery ground I reſt,
To ſpeedy Flight by Guardian Vertue preſt!
Vertue—thy ſacred Summons I obey: [Edgar *behind her.*
Thy Voice Divine do's all my Doubts allay.
Thy Muſick ſtrikes my Soul; a Power leſs ſtrong
Draws Savages, and Woods, and Rocks along.
Edgar, farewell—it cannot—muſt not be. *Takes to drink: ſets down, re-takes it.*
I come—I come—

SCENE IV.

Edgar.

Edg. ——Heav'ns otherwiſe decree. *As ſhe goes to drink*, Edgar *ſnatches the Glaſs.*
O're humane Life what Fate, what Furies reign?
What Plagues, what Seas did that ſmall Glaſs contain?

All

All Troubles from her by that Potion waſh't—— [*She ſwounds.*
On me the Death and Bitterneſs had daſh't.
No Deluge could have Nature more annoy'd:
The World to me were by her Death deſtroy'd.
But what untimely Fate has clos'd her Sight?
Unlock thoſe Eyes, two living Globes of Light.
Now am I equal to the Bleſt above; [*She opens her eyes.*
Now in their Orbs the rolling Wonders move.
Without which Stars, I, by dire Tempeſt toſt,
In Death and everlaſting Night am loſt.
Alfr. Sweet Viſion—ſtill detain'd in earthly Clime—
I'm bleſt—and ſeem in Heav'n before my time—
The King himſelf——.
Pardon, great Sir, a ſick, diſorder'd Mind.
Edg. I can account your Sickneſs onely kind.
My Happineſs from this Confuſion grows,
As Heav'ns fair Frame from ancient Chaos roſe.
Alfr. You, what by dying Wretches is confeſt,
Unhumane, to encreaſe their Torture, wreſt.
Edg. I am that Wretch, by your ſole Breath who live,
And from your Mouth have waited a Reprieve.
Yet you retract what in my favour paſt.
Alfr. In me (alas!) a Pow'r's unduely plac't,
A Pow'r of Life, unfortunately ſhown,
That fails even in diſpoſing of mine own.
Who fail in this are damn'd before their time.
Edg. I cannot hear this Sorrow's diſmall Chime.
Before that Face the blackeſt Tempeſts fly,
The ſcattered Clouds leave a ſerener Skie.
Glad Nature ſmiles—where you (her Pride and Care)
Once breathe, her richeſt Odours fill the Air.
She ſtrows her fragrant Treaſures in your way,
And there do's all her Sweets, and all her Pomps diſplay.
Alfr. Nature to me nor Fortune e're was kind;
For ſtill my Steps more Thorns then Roſes find;
And ſharpeſt Grief ſtill ranckles in my Mind.
Edg. If any Monſter-grief or Harpy gnaw,
Try what an Engliſh King and Love can doe.
I Nature's ſecret Chambers will explore,
The deepeſt Sea, and the remoteſt Shore;

Make

Make ſtubborn Rocks to your free Wiſhes yield,
Till your Deſires with ſhining Spoils are fill'd;
Till Gems and Pearls on heaps around you lie,
With all that's rare, and precious to the Eye,
Sweet to the Taſt, or to the Touch is fine:
Your every Senſe ſhall have its Magazine.

Alfr. To no Intemperance my Deſires fly out;
Yet in my Soul ranck Sorrows firmly root;
And there for other Bounties leave no room,
But onely thoſe through Death's cold hands that come.

Edg. Betwixt your Thoughts and Death let Ages ſtand;
And Happineſs take from a better hand.

Alfr. Death, Death I want———

Edg. ———Thus in *Diana*'s Train
Some Nymph would fly the ſhadow of a Man,
And bear the ſight of Savages alone,
On which her Darts and dextrous Rage was thrown.
You, from the Woods howe're retriv'd, appear
To Man as ſtrange, and wilfully ſevere;
And from a flaming Heart as wildly fly,
Not yielding your's ſhould know Humanity.
This milder Air ſhould ſofter Thoughts inſpire,
And a new Senſe, more kind to my Deſire.
Muſick howe're may this Averſion break,
And tame her Spirit—come, fair Nymph, partake—
The Maſque is ready——— [*Leads her away.*

SCENE V.

Enter at the ſame Door her Woman, Editha *meeting her, after them* Lewis *at a diſtance.*

Wom. The Danger's paſt that gave us this Alarm,
The King himſelf ſecuring her from Harm.

Lew. In what obſcure and dangerous Paths I tread,
By a blind Guide in endleſs Errours led!
Like him who Pain by a falſe Cure eſcapes,
My Eaſe is ſhort, but mortall the Relaps.
I muſt proceed—A tame and pooreſt Slave
The Plague and dire Extremity make brave.

If rudely I miſtake in place, or time, [*Offers a Picture.*
With favour judge a forward Dutie's Crime.
I to ſuſpend your Expectation fear'd,
And all Delay as Negligence abhorr'd.

Edg. With my Concerns had your juſt Duty ſquar'd,
You this unwelcome Diligence had ſpar'd.
The Picture do's my Thoughts ſo little preſs,
That onely the Originall could leſs.

Lew. The Object of your Rigour yet unknown,
This fierce Contempt is but at randome thrown.
But when I name the Prince, and when I ſay,
'Tis He whoſe hand do's the *French* Scepter ſway——

Edi. Then all your Meen and fine Addreſs was made,
To gain me to a curſt Uſurper's Bed;
Whom Conſcience with a ſilent Scourge ſhall tear,
And pale-fac'd Ghoſts from my Embraces ſcare;
Whoſe Throne by bloudy Scaffolds is upheld,
And by Slaves guarded, who their Maſter kill'd.

Lew. His Throne is fixt, and the Foundation good:
'Tis not leſs firm if cemented with Bloud.
Right is a Notion may the Simple ſting;
But with the Wiſe, Poſſeſſion makes the King.

Edi. Your Speech a ſtrange and inſolent Doctrine bears,
And Maximes yet unknown to *Engliſh* ears.
Rather to the true Prince, (did he ſurvive)
'Midſt his Diſtreſs, I would my perſon give;
With him partake his Indigence, and Toil,
Lurking in Holes, or wandring in Exile.
Howe're from Land to Land, from Coaſt to Coaſt,
By reſtleſs Storms of adverſe Fortune toſt,
I'd rather with him all Diſgraces bear,
Then guilty Pomps with your Uſurper ſhare.

Lew. I'm made a Convert, and relent to find
Thoſe generous Tranſports of your noble Mind.
And envy not the Tyrant's haughtie State,
But rather his whom you commiſerate,
Howe're forlorn, abandon'd, and undone:
Your Favours the Dethron'd and Baniſh'd crown.
Since for his Loſs you bear that generous ſenſe,
Here at your Feet behold that Injur'd Prince.

Edi.

Edi. You give at once too much to be receiv'd,
Nor can in this be ſuddenly believ'd.
And yet your Merits ſo poſſeſs my Mind,
That I believe, as by my Heart inclin'd:
And to the King will ſtraight make known your Caſe.
(His greateſt Pride is, Injuries to redreſs.)
And he ſhall in your Right his Arms advance.
Fates will that *Engliſh* Arms give Law to *France.*
Lew. Yet all that I, and all that they can gain,
To me muſt prove, without your Favour, vain.
Edi. I own'd your Merits in a private Dreſs:
Their Luſtre will not ſhine in Purple leſs. [*Exit* Editha.

SCENE VI.

Enter at the ſame Door Gunilda.

Lew. I, from my Kingdome, as by Shipwreck, hurl'd,
Loſing but Earth, find a new Golden world.
What-ever Loſs or Troubles on me fall, [*Aſide.*
Editha is a Recompence for all:
One Jewell that alone outweighs a Crown.
Gun. Ah, that my Heart were to this Stranger known!
Too much already hath with *Kenneth* paſt,
If Words or Vows can make a Woman faſt——
But why am I regardleſs what of old
Our Prophets in their *Runick* Rymes foretold,
Of what Import the world ſhould find the Knot,
A *Daniſh* Maid join'd to a Royall *Scot,*
Whoſe Iſſue throughout the whole Iſle ſhall ſpread
An Empire fixt under one onely Head?
Perhaps, for this Event a longer time is ſet——
As the ſlow Birth of an uncommon Fate.
Stay, Stranger—ſtay—ſuſpend your preſent Care: [*To Lew.*
I for your Breaſt a higher Secret bear.
A Princeſs loves you——
Lew. ——————You too much expreſs,
This, ah! you onely in my Favour gueſs.
Gun. One word might ſerve where the Affair is nice,
Nor ought you preſs to tell a Secret twice.

Lew. Regards ſhe me?——
Gun. ——Her Inclinations are
Beſt known to me, her Griefs I more then ſhare.
Lew. Bleſt Angel, Day-ſtar to my Happineſs,
(Since I th' Ambition of my Soul confeſs)
Some Token give t' indulge a weak Belief:
For ſtill I ſtruggle with black Doubts——
Gun. ——————That Strife
Is wilfully continu'd. All are ſlow,
And hardly learn what they are loth to know.
Lew. If Chymiſt, at his Furnace, pale, and old,
With wiſhing eyes purſues his Faiery Gold;
If famiſht Marr'ner from the ragged Beach,
A Ship in view, his ſuppliant Arms do's ſtretch;
I with more ardour this Diſcovery trace:
Treaſure to me, and ev'n my Life is leſs.
Diſplay the truth my Heart ſo hotly ſeeks.
Gun. Her Tongue, her Eyes, her every Action ſpeaks.
Lew. I never from the Princeſs could perceive
Ought, to encourage Hope, or Me to live.
Gun. Princeſs—his Thoughts are on *Editha* bent,
And on a Rock I pour my ſad Complaint. [*Aſide.*
You have my Words, but cannot read my Senſe,
So blinded by a brighter Influence.
Since Modeſty do's plainer Language fear,
Take this—this Picture—for th' Interpreter. [*Gives her Picture.*

SCENE VII.

Enter Kenneth *by ſurprize, and draws: She trembles.* Lewis *draws: She clings about* Lewis.

Ken. Friendſhip and Heav'ns, lo I your Thunder bear,
And ſhall your Juſtice from this Outrage clear.
Lew. Suſpect me falſe——I'm ready to engage;
Not willing, 'gainſt a raſh ill-grounded Rage.
Firſt hear——
Ken. ——From that bright Sanctuary break,
Nor, in thoſe Arms, inglorious Safety ſeek.

Are

Are thoſe white Arms and little Lims ſo ſtrong?
Yield me that Pledge, the Witneſs of my Wrong—
Gun. And ſhall not I be heard?— { *He offers at* Lewis. *She clings to* Kenneth.
Ken. ——————Oh powerfull Breath!
What Magick force, reſiſtleſs, ſtrong as Death,
Diſarms my Fury? My Reſentment ſleeps,
And o're my Rage a lazie Patience creeps.
My ſtormy Mind by a ſweet Dew appeas'd,
And flagging Veins of burning Bloud are eas'd;
My Will by a ſoft Violence conſtrain'd, [*She lets him goe.*
And I all wholly to Obedience chain'd.
Yield me—yield me that fatall Pledge, with which
She made thee, to thine own Deſtruction, rich.
Lew. To what is claim'd you the juſt Title loſe,
Whilſt to my Right you Threats and Force oppoſe.
To your calm Bloud I might the Gift reſign;
But if that you will have it your's,—'tis mine—
Since a Friend's name I cannot yet deveſt,
Knowing your Pulſe, I may impute the reſt
As wild Diſtempers of a Love unbleſt.
I am not falſe—nor ſhall your Right invade. [*Draws out the Picture.*
Gun. Ungratefull! is my Honour thus betrai'd? [*Aſide.*
Lew. Take it—and with it—this Aſſurance take,
I importun'd—ſhe gave it—for your ſake.
Gun. What ſudden Shame and Trouble blots my Face?
With how much Art he labours my Diſgrace!
Ken. Image of her who fills and rules my Heart:
She cruell is, inſenſible thou art.
Deſign'd for me? ah! touch that Note agen:
I hear not this, unleſs I hear it plain. [*Looking on the Picture.*
Said you, for me? I cannot hold my Joys.
Yet Unbelief all Weights and Shackles tries.
Her Modeſty, and Conſcious eyes caſt down,
Allow me not my preſent Bliſs to own. [*Exit* Gunilda.
I, though at diſtance, her fair Steps will trace,
Till I obtain, or periſh in the Race.

Exit Kenneth.

ACT

ACT IV.

Maſque.

A tempeſtuous Sea is repreſented, Neptune *heaving the Billows with his Fork.* Edgar *with* Alfrid *entring, the* Tritons *ſound their Shells: a ſudden Calm.* Neptune *lays his Trident at* Edgar's *Feet. The other Sea-gods,* Proteus *and* Nereus, *make likewiſe Obeiſance to him, and* Proteus *ſpeaks.*

Proteus. 'Tis now, what I foretold, that th' *Engliſh* Oak
By Heav'ns of old was deſtin'd for our Yoak;
And that our Necks no longer ſhould be free,
When from their *Thames* thoſe Ships launch out to Sea.
Ner. The *Engliſh* Power, that cannot be withſtood,
Springs rather from their Courage, then their Wood.
And if that Valour once were ebbing found,
The boaſted Keels would baſely rot a-ground.
Nept. From one great Prince how much a Nation gains!
In every Breaſt his Soul and Courage reigns.
He their glad Veins with generous Fire diſtends,
And to each Heart the brave Infection ſends.
From *Edgar* 'tis that *England*'s Glory grows.
Prot. More then one *Edgar* Fate to *England* owes.

Theſe retiring, Tritons dance: They retiring, 3 Sirens ariſe out of the Sea, and ſing.

THE SONG.

1. Siren. *Love, the* Ambroſia *of the Bleſt!*
'Tis Love in Heav'n that makes the Feaſt.
O Mortalls, Mortalls, come and taſt.

2. Sir. *Whilſt jingling Honour ſtrives for place,*
And Vertue ſets her ugly Face,
The Moments, the ſweet Moments paſs.

3. Sir.

3. Sir. *It cools, alas, how fast it cools!*
Fall to, ye men, ye men with Souls,
And Ceremony leave to Fools.

All. *When Nature invites,*
And keen Appetites,
Care tearing your Hearts and tormenting,
Is some Devil in the way,
That creates your Delay?
Or a Bug of some Bigott's inventing?

Three Celestiall Sirens approach, skymming on the surface of the waters. The former Sirens dive hastily, and disappear. These looking after them, say,

1. *Sir.* Fly, Monsters,—fly —with your deceitfull Breath,
That warbling strikes, and pleases unto Death.
Each tender ear ev'n yet the Accents wound,
And th' Air yet trembles with the impious Sound.
2. *Sir.* A Heav'nly Voice, and Beauty, they prophane,
With the unblest, abominable Train,
Which their false boasted Pleasures do's detect;
Sweet to the Sense, but Poison in effect.
3. *Sir.* Great *Edgar* from those Charms is safe,
To all, but those of Glory, deaf:
Glory, whose Chariot drives an height
'Bove the rude Jolt of sensuall Delight,
And hurry of low Passions. Victory
On silver Wings, and Triumph with them fly—

These 3 dance, and after, they retiring, the Sea seems troubled. Andromeda *appears ty'd to a Rock, a great Sea-monster making towards her.* Perseus *is seen in the Air, on* Pegasus, *with his Scimitar, and* Gorgon-*Shield. When* Edgar *abruptly starting up, turns from the Masque, and with Face towards the Pit speaks.*

Edg. Glory had once th' Ascendant, Glorie's Dart
Did from all other Flames my Breast assert;
Which, raging, now torment m' enfeebled Heart.

A Dream

A Dream of Majeſty—a King no more.
Theſe Shows are now leſs Shadows, then my Power
They repreſent. Love's utmoſt Malice try'd,
Has me dethron'd, degraded, and deſtroy'd.
If ought ſurvive, if ought of me remain,
'Tis but the ſenſe of an immortall Pain—
Love, I obey—and Captive follow thee
To Solitude—a fitter Scene for me.

Exit.

Edgar *gone, all in a conſternation goe of, and the Scene changes to a Garden.*

SCENE I.

Enter Lewis *ſolus.*

Lewis. Unhappy Princes, who a juſt War make,
And onely Arms, when neceſſary, take!
For me, yet cruell Heav'ns determine worſe;
Againſt my own, to head a forrein Force.
By thoſe that no Allegeance owe, obey'd,
Born to protect the Nation, I invade.
They have the Blows, yet I partake the Pain;
A Subject loſt, in every Foe that's ſlain.
My Mind's diſtreſs'd, whilſt my bold War ſucceeds;
My Heart, at every Wound they ſuffer, bleeds.
The *Engliſh* muſt my juſter Cauſe decide,
Whilſt them I in new paths of Glory guide.
How can the Continent their Shock ſuſtain,
Whoſe Arms ev'n force an Empire on the Main?
But—I ſhall teach them thus, perhaps, a way,
That *France* may wiſh untaught another day,
In *France* again their fatall Banners ſpread.
This Heav'n avert——
I love their Vertue, but their Valour dread.
Ambition, blunted by theſe ſoft Regrets,
My Love provokes, and to fierce Action whets.
'Tis not my Crown alone that I forgoe,
But with my Crown I loſe *Editha* too.

Let

Let Kingdoms my Deſpair in Aſhes mourn:
A meaner Flame the Univerſe will burn.

SCENE II.

Enter two old French *Statesmen. They on their Knees ſay,*

Both. Long live King *Lewis*——
1. *Stateſm.* ————The Uſurper gone,
France, with one Voice, recalls you to your Throne.
Your Abſence they lament——
Lew. ——Is *Rodulph* dead?
2. *Stateſm.* And (to the juſt Reproach of Heav'n) in Bed.
Yet his black Soul did th' Air and Heav'n deform,
And dying Breath did bluſter to a Storm.
As if the Troubles (ſince he ceas'd to live)
Which to the Earth he could no longer give,
He ſtill would through the Aiery Regions drive.
1. *Stateſm.* The Day which did his laſt black Night precede,
The bloudy Tyrant had your Death decreed;
And, hearing that to th' *Engliſh* Court you fled,
Sent two Embaſſadours to demand your Head.
2. *Stateſm.* But theſe things may in vacant hours be ſaid.
Our Bark, my Liege, waits ready, to convey
You ſafe, e're Fame the Secret ſhall betray.
Kings, caught on forrein Ground, are lawfull Prize:
And for a King what Ranſom can ſuffice?
Lew. I my Condition may ſome time conceal;
But cannot from this Court ſo rudely ſteal.
Nor can I fear the Danger you foretell,
Knowing the King, and *Engliſh* Hearts, ſo well.
1. *Stateſm.* Their generous Minds as nobly you report:
But who can find an *Engliſh-man* at Court?
No private Mind can any Courts controll;
All mov'd by Intereſt, their common Soul.
2. *Stateſm.* Hot Places thoſe, where Vertue cannot look;
But withers, dies, and vaniſhes in Smoak.
1. *Stateſm.* The private Love is ended that he bore,
Since you are now the Private man no more.

To ruine all, your Cauſe he might advance;
And, loving you, declar'd his Hate to *France*.
2. *Stateſm.* Your Kingdome he may, without Wrong, invade,
Till Articles and formall Leagues are made.
Friendſhip with Kings requires a certain Date,
Engroſs'd, and ſeal'd on Inſtruments of State.
Nor this, 'gainſt crafty Counſels, a Defence,
Who weaker Words ſuborn againſt the Senſe.
To ſacred Intereſt their bald Heads they nod:
That they adore, and know no other God.
1. *Stateſm.* Poſſeſs your Kingdom firſt, and then ſend back
Embaſſadours, your Complements to make.
Lew. Is that the Court?—Your Meſſage do's invite
Me thither, and from thence your Maximes fright:
Maximes, within the *Engliſh* Verge not known;
Nor ſhall in *France*, whilſt I poſſeſs the Throne.
Pardon me, King, to Friendſhip if unjuſt:
I yield unwilling to a Friend's Diſtruſt. [*Aſide.*
I on my Throne ſhall mourn with the Diſgrace,
If in your Breaſt I forfeited my place.
Attend me there, till I in ſuch Diſguiſe [*Points to a diſtant place.*
Return, as ſhall deceive obſerving Eyes.

Exeunt Stateſmen.

SCENE III.

Lewis *ſolus.*

For my Ambition Fortune could no more:
Yet am I, after all this Fortune, poor.
Ambition is not all—I will not move
One Step from hence, till proſperous in my Love.
No Power, no Scepters ſhall allure me hence.
Love too ſhall feaſt, though at my Pride's expence.
Bleſt Omen—ſee—her Image ſtrikes mine Eyes—
Heav'n guides her hither——

SCENE

SCENE IV.

Enter Editha.

——Madam,—— [*To* Editha.

Edi. ——That falſe Tongue
No more I'll hear——

Lew. ——Alas! I Triumph ſung [*Aſide.*
Too haſty, cheated by an empty Dream.
Yet, free from Guilt, I may the Tempeſt ſtemme. [*To* Editha.

Edi. An Innocence preſume not to perſwade:
Theſe Eyes beheld the Conference which you had,
The ſtrict new League and Interchanges made.

Lew. She ſaw me with *Gunilda* late embroil'd,
When *Kenneth* was in the ſame Errour toil'd. [*Aſide.*
What League? what Conference?——

Edi. ——New Allies to make
With Strangers, where new Fires you give and take.
Goe—'mongſt the Hearts by your feign'd Love engroſt;
Goe—and *Editha* in the Number boaſt. [*She offers to goe; he ſtops her.*

Lew. Let Heav'n not own, nor Earth ſuſtain me more,
If God, or Miſtris, I, ſave one, adore.
Both which by me too rudely were prophan'd,
If, whilſt in preſence here of both I ſtand,
I durſt be falſe——

Edi. ——She preſent? Alſo She
Is ſome inviſible Divinity.

Lew. Around ſhe do's ſuch dazzling Luſtre ſhed,
Ev'n, like the Sun, in her own Beams ſhe's hid;
And o're all other Beauties bears ſuch Sway,
They diſappear, like the Stars feeble Ray,
Drown'd in the Light and Deluge of the Day.

Edi. The Path I mark'd, your wary Language ſhuns,
And, ſafely wide, a wild Vagary runs.
You traverſe not the Charge againſt you laid,
But would by cunning Sophiſtry evade.
Me, your ill-tim'd and dawbing Flatteries paint,
When, for your Self, you a juſt Colour want.

But injur'd Friendſhip why ſhould I relate?
You muſt conteſt with Generous *Kenneth* that.
All—All will in *Gunilda* be repai'd:
And *Denmark* now comes buſtling to your Aid.
Yet though to th' *Engliſh* you the *Dane* prefer,
I envy not your Arms ſucceſsfull War.
For, your good Cauſe (whoever ſhall aſſiſt)
Will my beſt Wiſhes on your Party liſt.

Lew. From a wrong'd Friendſhip I've no Blemiſh drawn;
And for Succeſs, that reſts on You alone.
Your favourable Wiſhes give me more,
Then they, my Crown and Kingdome who reſtore.
Kingdoms by Marks and narrow Bounds confin'd,
You fill the vaſt Ambition of my Mind.

Edi. When with arm'd Threats you ſhould th' Uſurper brave,
You vainly like an idle Lover rave.

Lew. Is there a Secret I may not impart
To Her who holds in Cuſtody my Heart?
Th' Uſurper's dead; now for Relief I wait
At your Hands onely.———

Edi. ———I congratulate
The Happineſs of your recover'd Throne.

Lew. No Kingdom I, without your Favour, own.

Edi. This is a Copy of your private Mind:
You'll ſcarce the Record in your Kingdom find.
When Royall Cares once fill your larger Breaſt,
No place remains for any forrein Gueſt.

Lew. My Dignity will not my Gueſt diſcharge;
But rather furniſh, and the Room enlarge.
Which ſince your Image do's ſo nobly grace,
Majeſty will a brighter Power confeſs,
And yield to you the Conſecrated place. } Gunilda *comes.*

Edi. She by Appointment comes—falſe man—where She
Attends the Love, you practis'd but on Me———
I leave you to Her——— [*Exit* Editha.

Lew. ———The ſame Path I take.
I muſt the Chain of theſe Suſpicions break. [*Exit* Lewis.

SCENE

SCENE V.

Gunilda *looking on a Letter.*

Gun. My Brother—how? —Depos'd, and *Sigar* reigns—
His Title own'd by the perfidious *Danes*——
Fortune and Fate, what have I now to claim?
The wandring Shadow of an empty Name.
Speedy Aſſiſtence he from *Kenneth* craves.
See how (unknowing) he my Folly braves.
See—the juſt Curſe—on my Inconſtancy:
And loe a Victim, injur'd Love, to thee.
Now will the *Scots* about me fleering run,
And to vile Pipes my ſad Diſaſters tune.
Yet, ſpite of Fortune, I this Scepter hold:
With this in Hand, I will not be controul'd. [*Pulls out a Dagger.*
By this, within, an Empire I maintain;
And there, unmov'd, a perfect Princeſs reign.

SCENE VI.

Enter Kenneth.

Ken. Can any Trouble, Princeſs, touch your Breaſt,
And mine not ſink beneath the Load oppreſt?
Diſcloſe, fair Princeſs, your ſharp Grief diſcloſe.
I know the Pain, a ſtranger to the Cauſe.
Gun. Read this, and laugh—Do you, before the reſt, { *Gives him the Letter: he reads.*
Of freſh Revenge the raſie Pleaſure taſt.
Ken. 'Tis done—ſwift Orders I diſpatch, and all
The Kingdom to our Royall Standard call.
In Perſon I will join them on the Shoar:
Nor will I wait a Wind to waft us o're.
Nor will I reſt, till, *Sigar*'s Faction quell'd,
The Throne again is by your Brother fill'd.
Gun. I ſtand aſtoniſht at your forward Heat,
You have not weigh'd half my Misfortune yet.
To your fain'd Love what lighted firſt the way,
Our Riches, are the ravenous Tyrant's prey.

Deſpis'd,

Deſpis'd, deſpoil'd of all, *Gunilda* ſee;
Nor with her Portion, ſave in Miſery.
Ken. Give me *Gunilda*, and no Want I fear:
No other Wealth deſerves a Monarch's Care.
Leave the groſs Fewel for ignoble Fires:
A fairer Prey do's nouriſh my Deſires.
Gun. Your Language has that generous ſenſe diſplai'd,
As but too much my Errours do's upbraid,
And Conſtancy, ſo eaſily ſhaken, tax.
Ken. Heav'n ne'r made that a Vertue of the Sex.
Ah! look not back, when preſent Joys invite,
And *Hymen* calls with thouſand Torches light.
Gun. 'Tis Love alone has right thoſe Joys to boaſt:
But Love would here in Gratitude ſeem loſt.
Ken. Deep Gratitude the firm Foundation lies;
Whilſt we behold Love's glorious Structure riſe.
There will we reign—there drink eternal Joys—
And, touching Heav'n, the low dull World deſpiſe.
Gun. On equall Grounds I your Deſires would meet,
But Fortune thruſts me now below your Feet:
Which makes my Love ſuſpected, and that I,
Againſt my Choice, forc'd by Neceſſity,
Forſaken, hopeleſs, broken by Diſtreſs,
Into your Arms, as my laſt Refuge, preſs.
No; Malice, I thy hiſſing Snakes defy,
Thus arm'd—none e're was wretched that could die. [*Dagger in hand.*
I in my Heart can no Retrenchment find,
Nor have I loſt one Atome of my Mind,
Nor will in ought diminiſht to you come.
Ken. Frail Riches gone—to Courage left the Room. [*Enter* Edgar.
Edg. What Diſcord? Lovers—ſpeak—let me decide—
But leave me—'las! I am, within, employ'd
Too much my ſelf—

Exeunt Ken. *and* Gunilda.

SCENE

SCENE VII.

Edgar *ſolus.*

——— How tedious turns the Wheel
Of Time? how ſlow—where men in Torments dwell?
One Day would make Eternity in Hell———
To me this Inſtant that Long day has been:
Hell I have felt, for ſomething Heav'nly ſeen.
Ethelwold found ſome other of the Name:
This, She who rides on the white wings of Fame.
And I may This, the True, my *Alfrid* claim—
My giddy Thoughts run wild, and rave about;
My Mind is all Diſtraction: I will ſhut,
Shut cloſe my Eyes—lock the deceitfull Door—
I will not ſee—come near—think on her more—

SCENE VIII.

Alfrid *in Man's habit, as* Edgar *goes in haſt, from behind a Buſh runs againſt him.*

My Mind's unhindg'd, and the whole Fabrick ſhakes:
This Boy my labour'd Reſolution breaks.
Alfr. Fate ſees through my Diſguiſe, and makes me run [*Aſide.*
Into his very Arms, I ſtrive to ſhun.
Edg. I in this Face the matchleſs *Alfrid* ſee.
Heav'ns! are ye not her Brother?—Should he be,
Mad, and inconſtant, what were that to me?
Are you?—the baſhfull Grace—the pretty Fear,
All *Alfrid*, *Alfrid* to my Soul endear.
Sympathie is't, or ſome new Charm, do's ſeiſe,
Raviſh my Breaſt, and violently pleaſe?
Inſenſibly on me the Poiſon ſtole;
'Tis now within, and mingles with my Soul—
Oh Fire! oh Rage! oh certainly Divine,
No Humane power could thus—could thus disjoin,
And fix, ev'n in the Centre of my Life.
Senſe—Reaſon—vain and fruitleſs is your Strife,

In

In vain conteſting that this is not She.
'Tis—and by Heav'n deſign'd a Part of Me;
My deareſt—inmoſt Part — Thus hurry'd on,
Ah! whither will my raving Fancy run?—
You are her Brother.———
Alfr. ——— She no Brother had:
The onely Child was that unhappy Maid.
Edg. Then, you have known her———
Alfr. ——Seen her heretofore.
Edg. I ſaw, admir'd, and ne'r examin'd more.
Whom do's ſhe bleſt with name of Parents make?
Alfr. The Duke of *Cornwall* doth that Name partake.
Edg. Your Words directly to that *Alfrid* lead,
Whom I and all my Stars had mine decreed.
Shall His Embraces that bright Form prophane,
Whom Sacrilege and blackeſt Treaſons ſtain;
Who this Affront to Me and Heav'n durſt give,
Yet after have the Impudence to Live?
But, Traitour, I thy Fraud ſhall counterplot:
I will untie, or ſurely cut the Knot—
My Title's good: He courted her, —he ſped,—
And did her, onely, as my Proxy bed.
Alfr. The Ceremony went not yet ſo far:
She, by ſtrict Oath, engag'd him to forbear
The Marriage-Bed, till that three Nights were paſt:
Of which three Nights, this following is the laſt.
Edg. Heav'n, this great Work is thine, thy Care I ſee,
Since *Alfrid* is reſerv'd entire for me—
I'll ſearch her out——

{ *Going, meets* Ethelwold, *ſtops, and looks angry on him.*

SCENE IX.

Ethel. ——Reſtore, reſtore my Wife—
Or take, what I can better want, my Life.
Edg. Thy Wife?——what jealous Frenzie turns his Brain?
Where is this Wife?—where is ſhe?—But refrain
From calling *Alfrid* ſo; that Claim forbear,
And ne'r preſume to make a Title there.

Where

Where is my *Alfrid*? —— [Ethelwold *ſeiſes her.*
——This is her Diſguiſe.
What fatall Miſt conceal'd her from my Eyes?
What time was loſt?—Blind to my Happineſs,
I pine, and die, yet what I want poſſeſs.
Monſter of Impudence, yield—yield—her me. [*Snatches her.* Ethelw. *draws.*
Ethelw. I owe no Faith to naked Majeſty.
Without his Guards *King*'s but an empty Word:
The Scepter's his who wields the better Sword.

{Edgar *makes at him, throws him down, diſarms him.*

Edg. Live, wretched man!—thy Crimes do thee purſue,
And former Guilt ſtill ſpurs thee on to new.
Live—but depart—and leave this Pledge with me.
Ethelw. A low, baſe Soul would call this Clemency.
The Crimes I acted were on *Alfrid*'s ſcore:
And, were it in my power, I'd puſh at more.
You grant me Life, (a Gift that I deſpiſe,)
And rob me of the onely thing I prize.
I'll call her Mine with my laſt Gaſp of breath, [*Graſps her.*
And with cold Arms ſtill graſp her after Death.
Edg. By Fraud you got, and would by Force maintain.
Let not too far thy mad Preſumption ſtrain.
Can I ſee this? —— [*Takes her from him.*
Alfr. —Let not your Royall Hand
By a raſh man's diſtemper'd Bloud be ſtain'd.
If *Alfrid*'s Tears may any thing avail,
Ah! let not now their Interceſſion fail.
Edg. Your Words with me ſuch Sway ſhall always bear,
Thoſe you may truſt, and need not waſt a Tear.
But plead not, Heav'n did you together knit:
Heav'n ne'r could be a Party to the Cheat.
Alfr. This ſudden Paſſion with the Day aroſe;
And now may with the ſetting Sun repoſe.
The ſilent Night, and Sleep's refreſhing Dew,
May to your troubled Mind its Calms renew.
You then what's fit more clearly may diſcern:
And I a Vertuous Wife's Obedience learn.

Though you may charge my Marriage with Deceit,
Your's ſtands a firm irrefragable Lett.
Edg. Were She more cloſe preſerv'd, then, feign'd by *Greece*,
Th' *Heſperian* Gold, or the *Phryxean* Fleece,
By watching Dragons, fiery-Bulls ſecur'd,
'Mongſt Rocks of Braſs or Adamant immur'd,
Or 'mongſt eternall Ice beyond the Pole;
Did ſtormy Seas of Fire about her roll;
Yet would I truſt to Love's almighty Power,
And Heav'ns high Aid more confident implore.
She (though within my Arms by Fortune put)
Stands inacceſſible, and more remote.
Ah, Vertue too ſevere! too plainly I
The Flaming Sword, the angry Guardian ſee,
And Paradiſe for ever ſhut to me——
Yet ſurely I a certain Door diſcern;
The Bars give back, and eaſie Hindges turn.
Reaſon exalts a fair conſpicuous Head,
And beckens me to where my Wiſhes lead;
And tells, that yet no perfect Marriage paſt:
Nor I, by other Ceremony faſt——
With you, alone by Proxy, firmly ty'd:
Which Contract good, makes all the following void.
Alfr. Blind with Deſire, we each faint Glimmering watch;
And, for ſound Reaſon, empty Shadows catch.
If for your Agent *Ethelwold* was meant,
I, as his own, did give him my Conſent;
Did give my Hand, did ſolemn Words repeat,
Deſigning nothing to equivocate.
Though, by your Plea amus'd, my Reaſon bow,
My Conſcience will no other Husband know.
Edg. From all your Doubts I ſhall your Conſcience clear:
Mine is the Law, and the Interpreter.
Nor muſt I now your Inclinations fear?
Are they unjuſt? ——

SCENE

SCENE X.

Enter Ethelgede.

Ethelgede. —The guilty Couple flies,
Not daring ſtand th' Encounter of mine Eyes. (*They turn away.*
'Tis Vertue makes me bold: the Name of Queen (*She makes up to*
I coldly wear, whilſt *Alfrid* thruſts between (*them.*
Me and the Subſtance. Up to Juſtice yield
This Sorcereſs, long and wrongfully withheld [*To* Edgar.
From me, and from her Lord, my Father. I,
In both your Ears, the Law—the Law—will cry.
Edg. I ſhall not here alledge a Sovereign's Will,
Nor, by your Father's Rules, be juſtly Ill:
Whoſe dangerous Pencill would all Monarchs draw,
With Sword in Hand, and at their Feet the Law.
Ethelg. They to your Royall Hand the Sword who join,
By the ſame right, a Dagger place in mine. [*Pulls out a Dagger.*
Which her Heart's Bloud ſhall feel——
Edg. ———I will not hear
Theſe Threats, far hence the empty Flaſhes bear.
Ethelg. Is not my Rage, though from your Perſon ty'd,
Strong, and let looſe on all the World beſide?
This, as a Queen, I will not be deny'd.
Edg. Leave her—I almoſt took into my Bed [*To* Alfrid. *Exeunt.*
This Waſp———
Ethelg. ——This Waſp ſhall ſting your Minion dead.

SCENE XI.

Ethelgede *ſola.*

Fall on, fall on, Sword, Poiſon, Thunder, Hell;
The Earth, Air, Seas, with Death and Horrour fill.
Each Curſe, each Plague, my rouz'd Revenge ſhall try.
Furies,—*Medea*,—hear—aſſiſt me: I
Have the ſame Cauſe, have the ſame perfect Will;
I onely—onely want the Godlike Skill.

And can no Devil inſpire my ready Breaſt?——
My Spirit groans with Magick Rage oppreſt.——
Start not the Rocks, nor aged Mountains reel?—
Nor yet my Might do's the cleft Center feel?
The Poles, the Stars on heaps, th' affrighted Moon,
On All—on All—my hot Revenge is thrown.
Oh!—I have found where I can pain him moſt:
He ſhall no more his Wooden Caſtles boaſt,
His Navall Glory, deareſt Darling pride.
Ev'n in the Harbours whilſt ſecure they ride,
See, on each Hulk a fiery Storm is hurl'd,
And riſing Flames around the Top-maſt curl'd,
Diſmally bright, illuſtrate *Edgar*'s World.
He—pours out Sighs—and caſts—an helpleſs Look—
And now—his Eyes are melting with the Smoak.

Exit.

ACT V. SCENE I.

Garden.

Alfrid, *Woman with the Light.*

Alfr. PReſs me no more, nor Arguments purſue,
Too taking ſweet, too flattering to be true.
Wom. The Gown agrees, and all Opinions joyn,
You are th' undoubted, onely lawfull, Queen.
Alfr. Riches and Honour glaring in their ſight,
The Doctours ſquint, and rarely ſee aright.
A ſurer Guide Heav'n for my Conduct made.
Wom. But thus the Snare to your Advantage laid,
Who would not wink, and wiſh her ſelf betray'd?
Alfr. Leave tempting me, the glorious Hour is nigh.
Wom. What Hour?———
Alfr. ——The Hour—our Hell-born Jealouſy,
Tormenting Doubts, and vain Deſires ſhall die.

Wom.

Wom. What mean theſe Words? how diſmally they ſound?
Alfr. I to the King am by faſt Promiſe bound,
To meet him here: I ſhar'd his amorous Grief;
And for his Pains did thus deſign Relief.
Wom. Hear I this Language from your Mouth eſcape?
Rather the Fruit of lawfull Proceſs reap.
Before the World you might enjoy your Will;
Yet rather ſeek the falſe Delight to ſteal,
Waving a Title authoriz'd by Day.
Alfr. Let not your Thoughts theſe black Surmiſes ſway.
Though in the Dark, I ſhall not loſe my Way.
Goe—and beſeech the Queen immediately:
Beſeech her hither:—goe—without Reply.

Exit Woman.

SCENE II.

Alfrid.

Alfr. Tempted with all the Charms of Royall State,
Something I find, I can more highly rate:
Some Senſe I feel, ſome Grudgings ſtill remain.
And yet Ambition murmurs; but in vain,
Where Vertue, a more noble Pride, do's reign.
My Innocence more ſolid Glory brings,
Then from the Pomp of guilty Greatneſs ſprings.
This gives me Courage: in this Fort ſecure,
I all the Storms of Jealous Rage endure—
My ſending for the Queen, I fear, may be
Miſconſtru'd, as a rude Affront, in me.

SCENE III.

Enter Ethelgede, *and Woman.*

Ethelgede. Provok'd by this outrageous Inſolence,
I come:—but 'tis to puniſh your Offence.
Alfr. Neceſſity, and the Occaſion known,
You will not on my humble Duty frown.

To

To a few Words vouchſafe a patient Ear,
And after let me your Diſpleaſure bear.
Ethelg. Then ſpeak——
Alfr. —— Knowing what Grief your Mind do's ſting,
Suſpicious of my Conduct with the King——
Ethelg. Say, I ſuſpect your Villany, I ſee't,
I know it all——
Alf. ——Behold me at your Feet. [*Kneels.*
Ethelg. What feign'd Remorſe, what Strategem is here?
Alfr. By all in Heav'n we Sacred call, I ſwear,
I am to You and to my Honour Juſt,
And here preſume to vanquiſh your Diſtruſt.
This Night your Grief and painfull Doubts ſhall clear:
In theſe dark Paths your Wiſhes ſhall not erre,
Permitting my Advice to be your Guide.
Ethelg. Riſe—and no longer this ſtrange Secret hide.
Alfr. This day I in a Labyrinth have worn,
Where ſtill I met the King at every turn.
Within, ſome ſtubborn Conflict ſhakes his Breaſt,
(For this his Words and every Look confeſt.)
But whither his diſtracted Motions lead,
You better gueſs, who have in Courts bin bred.
Yet leſt to me he might ſome Favour aim,
Which you alone by Marriage-right may claim——
Ethelg. What now remains? be ſhort.——
Alfr. ——Within this Hour,
He in the Dark will trace me to that Bowr.
There We together may his Coming wait.
And leſt your Silence any Doubt create;
My Voice ſhall him, as he approaches, guide,
Whilſt ſilently into his Arms you glide.
And having once aſſwag'd his Amorous Heat,
He will applaud the innocent Deceit:
And your Embraces ſuch Succeſs may find,
As to your Love may him for ever bind.
Ethelg. The Secret's out: —yet will not this atone
For all the Ill by your Inchantments done.
An Injur'd Love can never be repair'd.
For this Night my Revenge ſhall be deferr'd,
And you ſhall take the Reſpite for Reward.

The

The King has all the day in Darkneſs been;
Elſe you had not been courted for the Queen.
Alfr. You cannot yet your Jealouſies digeſt:
Something yet ſwells, and boils within your Breaſt.
But I can better your Reproaches bear,
Then from the glorious Paths of Vertue erre.
Deſpiſe, abhorre, affront, abuſe me ſtill;
I ſhall not be, for your Requitall, Ill.
Forbear, and let us to the Place be gone,
Leſt his Impatience ſlower Time outrun.

Exeunt.

SCENE IV.

Enter Edgar. *He appears at the Door with the Secretary of State, as importun'd by him; but breaks from him, and after ſome ſteps, ſtops.*

Edg. Heav'n taxes Greatneſs with proportion'd Care:
A King not one Day to himſelf can ſpare.
By a new Pain and wild Diſtractions croſt,
This, almoſt, I inſenſible have loſt.
Yet I this Minute from my Love may ſnatch.
What reſts unfiniſht, that requires Diſpatch? [*Turns to the Secretary.*
Secret. The *Scots* in Arms againſt their King declare,
For yielding to become your Homager.
The *Welſh* rebell, and this Advantage take,
From their ſtiff Neck the *Engliſh* Yoak to ſhake.
Edg. Or rather, ſtruggling, it uneaſie make.
What elſe requires our Care?——
Secret. ——Within, ſtill wait
The *French* Embaſſadours, importunate
For your laſt Anſwer.——
Edg. ——That they had before——
If not yet pleas'd, conduct them to the Door.

Exit Secretary.

SCENE

SCENE V.

Edgar *ſolus.*

My warmer Bloud, and Spirits that briskly fly,
Inform me that the happy Hour is nigh;
And from my Breaſt all publick Cares would fling.
The Man—I feel—grows ſtronger then the King.
Yet more—one Minute's Truce for publick Good—
I'll ſhake thee off—Rebellious Fleſh and Bloud.
That Minute paſt—then Paſſions take your ſwing,
Till the King's Work is done—I will be King.

SCENE VI.

Enter Secretary with Embaſſadours.

Edg. I muſt be ſhort; I all that you demand, [*To Embaſſ.*
Already, and your Reaſons, underſtand.
The Titular King, your Maſter's Enemy,
You ſay, did here to Sanctuary fly.
Too far your Power and blind Revenge would ſtretch,
If you would thoſe in my Protection reach.
But if that Injur'd Prince (to me unknown)
Were here, my Kingdom ſhould be as his own:
My Crown ſhould lie at ſtake till his were wone.
I would, and in ſuch manner, ſend him back,
As on his Throne ſhould the proud Rebell ſhake.
You next crave Leave (which modeſtly is done)
To build a little Navy of your own.
Which to perſwade, your Reaſons are no more,
Then mine for building Caſtles on your Shoar.
In my Dominions (nor th' Indulgence ſlight)
I give you Leave to Traffick, not to Fight.
I ſhall your Trade 'gainſt Piracies enſure,
If Forty hundred Sail the Seas can ſcour.
But I am told, e're this Addreſs was made,
You the Foundation of this Fleet had laid.

And

And then I, in your Complements return,
Muſt ſend one Ship ſhall your Armado burn.
Not that we value all your Navall Power.
Could every Ship, like Fiſh, ſpawn Thouſands more;
We ſhould chaſtize and check the monſtrous Brood.
Our Trees bewitch'd, and curſt were in the Bud,
If *Engliſh* Oak dreads ought that's made of Wood.

SCENE VII.

Serjeants enter, with Lewis *bound in Diſguiſe.*

Serjeants. We took him in Diſguiſe, prepar'd to fly—
Edg. I'll hear no more—This Opportunity
Is welcome, ſince I in ſome meaſure may [*To* Lew.
The Honour, I too long have ow'd you, pay.
You ſhall be Admirall; and, for greater State,
Ten hundred Frigats on your Flag ſhall wait,
To burn, or ſee their Infant-Navy knockt
To pieces, e're on the Salt waves 'tis rockt.
My ſelf will forthwith your Commiſſion ſeal. [*Exeunt all.*

SCENE VIII.

Ethelwold *ſolus, with Dagger in hand.*

Ethelw. A timely Chance the Secret did reveal.
With This I'll guard the Treaſures you would ſteal.
Another reaps my Harveſt, whilſt I ſtarve:
For my Part, onely Husks and Chaff they carve.
I muſt forbear her Bed—by Oath made Poor;
And here in ſecret ſhe breaks up the Store.
How intricate the Heart of Woman is!
No Eye, no Sun can pierce the dark Abyſs.
I yet will ſhare—Howe're ſhe may deny
My Love—I my Revenge will ſatisfy.
With This I'll force her—till that Heat I cloy; [*Holds Dagger.*
And through the Body I'll her Soul enjoy.
I will lie cloſe—and with one free Home-thruſt,
Aſſwage both her inſatiate Pride and Luſt.

I'th' Dark, and with my Own, I may be bold.
The next ſhall find his Entertainment cold.
The King's Embraces give her Ecſtaſies:
In Mine ſhe more effectually dies. [*Exit.*

SCENE IX.

Enter Edgar; *a Souldier preſſes after him with a Torch.*

Edg. Preſs me no farther—I command—withdraw.
Sould. I'll ſpeak—and then your Anger undergoe.
Edg. What is't you with this rude Impatience crave?
Sould. 'Tis Loyall Rudeneſs, that your Life would ſave—
This way I heard a Man,——
He gnaſh'd his Teeth with Diſcontent,
And rav'd, and mutter'd Treaſon, as he went.

SCENE X.

Enter Alfrid *running*; *looks earneſtly on the King.*

Alfr. A Man (I thought it had your Highneſs been)
Seiz'd, and has barbarouſly ſlain the Queen. [*Enter Woman.*
Wom. The Murth'rer too fell with her; I diſcern'd,
And heard, methought, the Stabs that ſhe return'd.
Broken with Throbs, ſhe theſe Laſt words did ſtrain,
Take, bloudy Tyrant—take thy Gift again.
Edg. Who can expound this bloudy Myſtery?
Her Words ſay, in her Thoughts ſhe murther'd Me.
'Las! not by Malice, but Revenge enflam'd,
At her Aſſaſſin, not the King, ſhe aim'd.
Our Bubble-Hopes! moſt brittle, when moſt fair!
Which ſwelling ſhine, and vaniſh into Air.

SCENE XI.

Enter Guards, Lights, Lewis, Kenneth, *&c.*

Sould. Her Father, (whate're Fury ſpurr'd him on) [*Souldier returns.*
Duke *Ethelwold*, this horrid thing hath done.

Edg.

Edg. Duke *Ethelwold?*———
Sould. ——— In their mixt Goar he ſwims,
And with ſtiff Arms ſtill graſps her congeal'd Lims.
Alfr. My cruell Stars this fatall Train have laid;
And to the Snare I have the Queen betray'd.
Edg. You guilty? —it a blacker Crime would ſeem,
To ſuſpect You—then 'twas to murther Them.
No bloudy Stain on your bright Form impreſs'd,
Nor on theſe Hands can any Guilt be trac'd. [*Takes her by the hand.*
Alfr. 'Las! I the Queen to your Embraces ſent:
And ſee how Fate has wreſted mine Intent.
Edg. Fate, or the Hand of Providence, appears;
And now the rugged Walk to my Contentment clears.
Heav'n has unravell'd now the dark Decree;
And the high Source of my juſt Love I ſee;
By *Ethelwold* and humane Cunning croſt,
Till he in his deep Policy is loſt.
'Las! I forgive him—who but, for her ſake,
All Loyalty and ſtrongeſt Ties would break?
This is an happy unexpected Leap: [*To* Alfrid.
Now, Innocent, I all my Wiſhes reap.
Now, *Alfrid*'s Mine, my now undoubted Right;
For ever Mine, for ever my Delight.
Lew. Now in an Hour to brave Deſires ſo juſt,
I will not the Succeſs of mine Diſtruſt.
This I give back into your Royall Hands. [*Gives up his Commiſſion.*
Edg. This ſeems as in Contempt of our Commands:
Or, that great Souls in Dangers moſt delight,
And, void of thoſe, the eaſie Honour ſlight.
Lew. Your Highneſs will more juſt my Scruples rate,
Inform'd who 'tis you did Commiſſionate:
The King of *France*—behold him in your Power.
Edg. In what thick Darkneſs wander'd I before?
Are you that Injur'd Prince?——
Lew. ———Th' Uſurper dead,
France has at length my Juſter Title weigh'd,
And own'd me King, while I am Vaſſall here.
Edg. That, from the *Engliſh*, you unkindly fear.
Shall We your generous Confidence abuſe?
A nobler Courſe to Greatneſs here we chuſe.

Lew. No Greatneſs e're was equall to your Mind,
Like Heav'n, by nothing but it ſelf confin'd.
Whoſe Actions ſuch illuſtrious Aſpect bear,
That Monarchs, who would copy them, deſpair.
Edg. For my Reply I ſhall not Language ſeek;
My Deeds will more effectually ſpeak.
Whilſt here my Court is honour'd with your Stay,
In all with Me You equally ſhall ſway.
And when for *France* you quit the *Engliſh* Shore,
Half of my Navy ſhall conduct you o're.
Two thouſand Frigats, in the *Downs* that ride,
Shall all be on that glorious Work employ'd.
Lew. Yet, for all this, I reſt that deſperate Slave,
Whom (I may ſay) not all your Power can ſave.
Your Royall Bounty on the Wretch is loſt;
By a ſeverer Power your Sentence croſt:
A Power, that now, even in your Preſence, reigns,
And, whilſt you Freedome grant, condemns to Chains.
Edg. Some Viſion checks the Freedome I approve.
Lew. What you this empty Viſion call, is Love.
Edg. A King of *France*, and doubtfull of his Claim?
All Hearts muſt melt before that ſovereign Flame.
Lew. You will except, when I *Editha* name.
Edg. I freely that Alliance ſhall embrace:
And where can ſhe her Love more nobly place?
Thus Fortune both my Siſters will advance:
That, *German* Empreſs; This, the Queen of *France.*
And if, like me, ſhe balances Deſert,
With a leſs Crown ſhe might accept your Heart.
Lew. Yet, Madam, yet is your Conſent deny'd:
My Joys wou'd flow, your Rigour checks the Tide.
Edi. The Splendours of a Kingdom fill your Eyes:
Each Object elſe beneath your Proſpect lies.
Lew. Were all the Glory of the World in view,
I ſhould be blind to All the reſt, but You.
A Kingdom, then Content to me can yield,
When your fair Hand ſhall the ſame Scepter wield.
I rather here wou'd lie, fixt at your Feet,
Then in a Throne from You divided ſit.

Edi.

Edi. You, whilſt eclipſt, may think an Object bright,
That will ſhine dim, when you regain your Light.
When Crown'd, and on your Throne, conſult your Mind:
Thence (if you ſtill theſe Inclinations find)
They may be more authentickly expreſt,
In Pomp of ſolemn Embaſſie addreſt.

Edg. The King himſelf, his own Embaſſadour,
What can contribute to your Honour more?
He muſt not wait, with tedious Forms amus'd;
But as a King, and as my Friend, be us'd.

Edi. Stateſmen abroad, maliciouſly wiſe,
Will ſay, we make of the *French* King a Prize:
That he, with vile Advantage baſely trapt,
By Marriage, onely other Bonds eſcap'd.

Edg. Theſe Difficulties you ſo nicely move,
Are none; or are, however, none to Love. [*Gives him her hand.*
Take her—one Hour—one Prieſt our Hands may joyn;
And the ſame Stars ſhall on our Nuptialls ſhine.

Ken. Your Will, Great Sir, muſt ever be obey'd,
When you Command, or when you but Perſwade.
Would you, on my behalf, exert your Power,
This too might prove My favourable Hour.
For Me, with fair *Gunilda* interpoſe.

Edg. This Conduct an exceſſive Paſſion ſhows,
And in your Breaſt do's ſuch a Flame confeſs,
That the Combuſtion in your Kingdom's leſs.

Ken. That Trouble's paſt, and our Repoſe is due
To the great Genius that ſtill waits on You.
The Rebell Force all met in a large Field,
Which to the Sea do's a near Proſpect yield.
There as they train'd, and exercis'd for Fight,
Your Navy came to Anchor in their ſight:
Which through the Crowd a conquering Terrour ſent,
Whoſe conſcious Minds ſuſpected the Intent;
Hence mutiny, and, the chief Leaders ſlain,
They left their Arms as Lumber on the Plain.

Edg. Then may we calculate the Fate of *Wales*,
Since their Support and Hope of *Scotland* fails.

Gun. Ah! labour not—nor to low Objects bend [*To* Kenn.
His Nobler Thoughts, which publick Care attend.

The

The Pleas of Love allow of no Appeal;
And the more preſt, the more my Reſolutions ſwell.
Edg. I know the Scruple, where *Gunilda* ſticks;
And muſt that generous Sullenneſs unfix.
My Coffers ſhall with Intereſt repay,
As charg'd on me, what Fortune took away.
To the *Scotch* Foot, Ten thouſand *Engliſh* Horſe
Shall ſtraight be joyn'd, the Rebell *Danes* to force.
To this I adde, whilſt your two Lives remain,
Both Homage-free and abſolute ſhall reign;
And henceforth ſhall to *England* onely come
In Friendſhip's name———
Ken. ——Oh thou, our better Doom, [*To* Edgar.
As Heav'n ſerene, reſiſtleſs ſtrong as Fate!
Gun. Not *Hercules* was ever feign'd ſo great,
Nor that Redreſs to humane Wrongs could give; [*To* Edgar.
Heav'n's Steward, Champion, Repreſentative.
Edg. 'Tis done—— [Ken. *takes her by the hand.*
By no Conjunction Heav'n could yet eſſay,
What, Princes we, by our joynt Nuptialls may,
To make one great and memorable Day.
[*As they are going off,*

SCENE Ult.

Enter Dunſtan.

Dunſt. By Fame inſtructed, I am hither led,
To warn you, that you muſt not *Alfrid* wed. [*To* Edgar.
Edg. Not *Alfrid* wed? that ſtabs me at the Ear:
What murth'ring Oracle is this I hear?
So many Storms Heav'n ſuffer'd me to ſcape,
Now thunders on me with an After-clap.
Not *Alfrid* wed? the Myſtery unfold:
What Law? what Book? what Spirit this has told?
Has Heav'n for me done Miracles in vain?
I'm in a Pit, and thought the Paſſage plain.
Dampt are my Hopes, and all my Joys are fled.
Where is that Text, I muſt not *Alfrid* wed?
Dun. When the Church took her firſt within the Pale,
You for her Chriſtian Carriage ſtood as Bail:

And

And ſo aſſiſting to Regenerate,
Reſt in Degree, as Father who Begat,
By Spirituall Relation. ———
Edg. ——Has th' Offence
No higher Source, I with my ſelf diſpenſe.
Muſt I from Rocks and certain Danger quit,
Now in the Port, and on a Pebble, ſplit?
Is that a Law t' obtrude upon a King?
Whence do's the pinching Obligation ſpring?
'Tis not a Law in God's or Nature's Book.
Dunſt. On *Rome*, and on the Holy Canons look.
Theſe muſt command, where God and Nature's mute;
And that Command no Temporall Prince diſpute.
Provoke not from the Holy Chair a Curſe.
Edg. If *Cæſar* liv'd, could I be threatned worſe?
I will that Curſe in the mid Ocean meet,
And 'gainſt it try the fortune of a Fleet.
Dare you preach here what any Laws define, [*Exit* Dunſtan.
That are not ſhown under God's Hand or Mine?
Lew. You bravely act, what others onely think,
Who low beneath th' encroaching Deluge ſink,
O'rewhelm'd and dampt by Superſtitious Fear;
You'r truly King, and keep the Character.
Kenn. Kings their Juſt Rights to know from You ſhall gain,
And, thoſe Juſt Rights, a Courage to maintain.
Edg. No harſh Diſputes muſt our ripe Joys allay.
Now Love and Triumph challenge all the Day.

The End.

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